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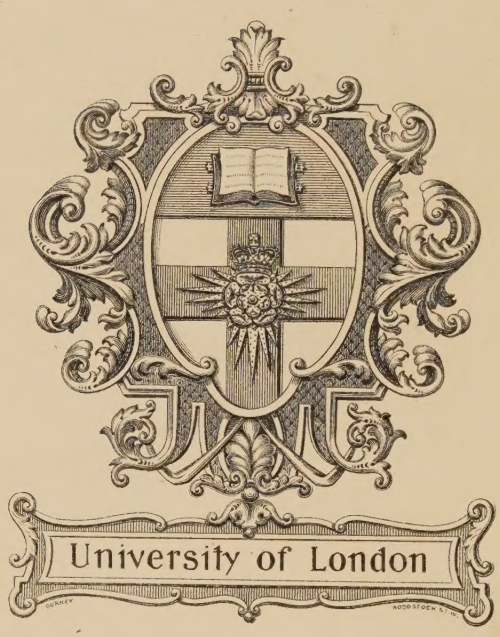

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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOL. LXXXIV.

HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES:

THIRD SERIES,

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

9° VICTORIÆ, 1846.

VOL. LXXXIV.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF FEBRUARY,

TO

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MARCH, 1846.

Second Volume of the Session.

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1846.

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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE *FIFTH SESSION* OF THE *FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET 11 NOVEMBER, 1841, AND FROM THENCE CONTINUED TILL 22 JANUARY, 1846, IN THE NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 24, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª· Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland); Game Laws.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By the Duke of Richmond, from Noblemen, Gentlemen, and others, of the County of Peebles, and other places, in favour of the Corn Laws.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Clergy, Landowners, and others, of Abbas Coombe, and several other places, for Protection of the Agricultural Interest.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Noblemen, Commissioners of Supply, and others, of Forfar, and other places, against the Principles of Free Trade.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Inhabitants of the Township of Sutton on the Forest, for the Adoption of a Measure to prevent the Unconstitutional Proceedings of the Anti-Corn-Law League.—From Landowners, and others, of the Parish of Somerton, against Real Property Registration Bill.—By Lord Kinnaird, from Incorporation of Weavers, Dyers, and Clothdressers of Canongate, Edinburgh, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.

THE CASE OF BRYAN SEERY.

THE MARQUESS of WESTMEATH said, he must beg the attention of their Lordships for a very few moments in consequence of what appeared on the face of the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons of that morning. It appeared that a question was put by an hon. Gentleman to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to know whether any deputation from the county of Westmeath had waited on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in reference to the case of Bryan Seery, who, as their Lordships probably knew, had been lately tried by a Special Commission in the county of Westmeath, where he had been convicted and sentenced to be hung; and the question asked was, whether the deputation had gone up to pray the Lord Lieutenant that the law might take its course? Now, as far as he could put a construction upon the answer of the right hon. the Home Secretary, he stated that a deputation had proceeded from the county of Westmeath for that purpose. This being the case, he thought their Lordships would not be disposed to refuse him the opportunity of expressing his regret that the right hon. Gentleman should have given that answer, because no such deputation had gone up from the county of Westmeath. The noble Marquess was proceeding, when—

The EARL of ST. GERMANS rose to order, and begged to call their Lordships' attention to the inconvenience of the course

which the noble Marquess was pursuing in remarking, not on the proceedings of the other House of Parliament, but upon a speech which he said had been delivered there, but respecting which he could know nothing except through the ordinary channels of information, that was to say, the newspapers.

LORD BROUGHAM quite agreed with the noble Earl. But the noble Marquess need not have spoken of what he wished to refer to as having been a speech delivered in the other House of Parliament. All he had to do was to say he had seen it represented that so and so had been stated in another place, and then to have asked whether that was the case or not; or he might have taken it for granted that the statement had been made, and then made his own remarks upon it.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH said, it was far from his intention to take any unfair proceeding in that House. It was no object of his to take advantage of the ignorance of any noble Lord as to what had fallen from a Colleague in office; but he thought the noble Earl could tell him whether that answer was given or not. When that answer, as reported, went forth to Ireland, the whole of that side of the press would bear on the magistrates of Westmeath. He should have been bound to have given notice of his question if he had thought that the thing would have kept. He asked whether the Secretary of State had made that answer or not?

The LORD CHANCELLOR: Where? In what place?

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH: In the other House of Parliament.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: Ah, you cannot ask that question.

LORD BROUGHAM said, it was plain that the noble Marquess had got his object, for he had given the most positive contradiction to the whole statement, and that without contradiction.

NEWENHAM'S DIVORCE BILL.

LORD BROUGHAM then said, that he wished to bring before their Lordships a case of hardship for which the law and the Constitution afforded no remedy. Their Lordships would recollect the case of "Wakefield *v.* Turner;" he had followed exactly the practice that was adopted in their Lordships' House in that case. The petition praying for the Divorce Bill which he was to present to their Lordships was the petition of Jane Wortham, of Stoke Newington, Middlesex, the widow of a Mr. Wortham, who died in 1842. The family were at that time in narrow circumstances, and took lodgers; and Thomas Burton Newenham, a person of forty years of age, or upwards, became an inmate of the house. The widow had a daughter about thirteen years of age. Soon after the death of Mr. Wortham, in 1842, a succession opened to the daughter to a landed estate of 400*l.* a year. Newenham laid his plans immediately. He visited at the house where he was no longer a lodger since the improved circumstances of the family. Mrs. Wortham was put off her guard from the disparity of years, and from his having known Miss Wortham since she was a child of eleven years old. The girl, as was represented to him (Lord Brougham), was not of strong understanding. Newenham took an opportunity, about five o'clock one evening, when Mrs. Wortham was out, to state that her mother's affairs rendered it absolutely necessary that Miss Wortham should proceed with him to his solicitor's in Furnival's-inn. Instead of conveying her there, however, he took her to the Euston-square station of the Birmingham Railway, and ultimately to Gretna-green, having effected her seduction, as it appeared, on the road. At Gretna-green the parties were married and came back. Newenham was tried for the abduction at the Central Criminal Court, convicted, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Mrs. Newenham, it appeared, had been since delivered of a child; but the relief asked by this Bill would not bastardize the child, for it would only go to dissolve the marriage. All that he begged of their Lordships was the amplest attention to this case. He did not wish to provoke any discussion, and he therefore merely stated the facts. He wished to refer the whole matter to a Committee of the whole House. This was a case in which the wickedness of one party worked on the innocence and ignorance of another party, so as to destroy that individual's peace of mind, and transfer the whole of her property to himself. In this instance the man had acquired a right to all the woman's personal property without any control. All these grievances she would sustain, if their Lordships could not grant her relief; and therefore he prayed their Lordships to weigh well and maturely the whole bearings of this case.

The LORD CHANCELLOR hoped his noble and learned Friend would have the

petition printed before it was referred to the Committee.

Lord BROUGHAM concurred, and was understood to say that he could not lay before the House the whole circumstances of the case of Wakefield, as all the inquiry that could be made on the subject was in a great measure useless, in consequence of the Wakefields having bought up the published accounts of the case.

Lord CAMPBELL must enter his solemn protest against the proposal for dissolving marriages which it was admitted had been celebrated according to the law of Scotland. This was a case where the marriage was clearly in accordance with that law, where the parties had lived as man and wife, where the marriage had been consummated, and there had been issue of that marriage. To talk of dissolving that marriage, and leaving the child legitimate, would be contrary to all principle, and might be attended with most alarming consequences. He agreed with the noble and learned Lord that the law of Scotland was exceedingly defective, and ought to be amended; and he hoped that the learned Judges in Scotland would return to the opinion they held in 1835 on that subject. But while the law remained as it was he held that it must be obeyed; for if they were to allow the dissolution of a marriage which was admitted to be valid, and of which there was issue, there was no saying where such a proceeding might stop, if once adopted.

Lord BROUGHAM thought, if all marriages were to be dissolved which were contracted under the same circumstances which characterized the present case, no great harm would be done. If a robber entered a house and took off a child of fourteen—that robber being a man of forty—and by the grossost fraud contracted a marriage with that child, he did not think the consummation of that marriage anything but a gross aggravation.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT OF THE GAUGE COMMISSION.

Lord KINNAIRD rose to ask the noble President of the Board of Trade the question of which he had given notice, relative to the Report of the Commissioners on the subject of the broad and narrow Gauge. Of all the important questions that were likely to come before Parliament during the present Session, he considered the question of railways as one that demanded the most serious consideration of the Legislature. Whether they looked upon them in a commercial point of view, as affording to merchants the means of conveying their goods to distant places more rapidly than before, and thus rendering it unnecessary for them to keep large stocks of goods on hand, while they were enabled to turn over their capital more frequently; whether they looked at them in an agricultural point of view, as tending to equalize prices throughout the country, and facilitating the transfer of the farmer's produce to the most populous districts; or whether they looked at them in a social point of view, as affording the means of travelling to the most remote parts of the country—on all these grounds, he thought the Legislature was bound most seriously to consider the question of railways, and secure at once the convenience and safety of the public. He might also refer, as the Commissioners had done, to the increased means of defence they afforded in reference to military movements; and likewise to the financial considerations which their Lordships must see could not be disassociated from the subject of railways. It was quite evident from what had taken place in the funds lately that this was a point requiring the most careful consideration; he believed that under a proper system of control there was no better security for investment than the railways, because, whilst they were adding to the benefit and the happiness of individuals, they were also the means of adding to the capital and resources of the country. Considering, then, the importance of the subject, he was certain he would stand excused for calling the attention of their Lordships to the question of railways. He hoped the House would yet see it to be its duty to grant permission to make the inquiry whether or not some rule should be adopted for effecting a proper control of railways—he meant, of course, a control in regard to the working of them, and whether there should not be inspectors appointed to see that the respective lines were conducted according to the Acts under which they were framed. They must be aware that several accidents on railways which might have been avoided had occurred from mismanagement; and that these accidents, with their causes, it was the interest of the railway companies to conceal from the public. He had known unfortunate sufferers by these accidents, who stated that there would be little hope of anything being done by the Legislature till a Member of Parliament or two had

been killed, and then some protective measure would be taken. He thought also much might be done in the way of facilitating Railway Bills, and at the same time putting an end to undue railway speculation. In regard to the Report of the Commissioners, it appeared that they had taken considerable pains to acquire information. That Report appeared to him to be in favour of the broad gauge, except for the conveyance of merchandize; but he found that, notwithstanding this, they recommended the adoption of the narrow gauge, and that in future all railways should be constructed on the narrow principle. He must say he was surprised at the conclusion to which the Commissioners had come, as it appeared that at high velocities the narrow could not be made so safe as the broad gauge; and he regretted that the Commissioners had not duly considered the possibility of adopting a medium gauge. They seemed to have fallen into an error in thinking that it would be impossible to alter the narrow gauge to a wider one, on account of the tunnels; but he thought that this was quite a mistaken notion. His opinion was, that the whole two thousand miles of narrow gauge which were at present in existence in this country might be altered without any considerable inconvenience, if it were necessary, or without such a great expense as would put that experiment out of the question; and he thought that this was a peculiarly favourable time for effecting the alteration. Upon one or two lines, the rails had been altered without stopping the traffic, and on another, the gauge had already been altered. If it were necessary, in order to carry out the alterations to which he had alluded, money might be advanced for the purpose by Commissioners, and the railways could repay it by a tax for a certain number of years. He would, in conclusion, ask when the evidence on which the Commissioners founded their Report would be laid on the Table of the House; and he was also desirous to know when they might expect to be informed of the determination of the House on the subject?

The Earl of DALHOUSIE, in reply to the question, begged to remind the noble Lord that the Commission for inquiring into the Railway Gauges arose out of a discussion in the other House of Parliament, not so much with reference to the respective gauges, as to the question whether public inconvenience might not arise from the diversity of gauge, and of the necessity of finding some means of getting quit of that diversity. In consequence of that discussion an Address to the Crown was moved, and a Commission was accordingly appointed and directed to inquire whether there were any means of obviating the inconvenience, and whether it was possible to secure an uniformity of gauge. Its Report was now on their Lordships' Table. The Commissioners recommended that the gauge of 4 feet $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches should be that adopted by the Legislature; that all railways in course of construction and to be hereafter constructed, should be in accordance with that gauge; and that endeavours should be made to discover means by which some equitable arrangement could be carried out to bring the broad gauge railways to the uniform standard. These recommendations were of great importance, and would require to be deliberately and calmly considered. They would affect the interests of the public, either for good or for ill, very deeply. An enormous amount of capital was involved in the interests concerned, whether the lines were on the broad or narrow gauge, and therefore great caution would require to be exercised. No effect, indeed, could be given to those recomendations without the sanction of Parliament. The Government had felt that while they had every confidence in the impartiality of the Commissioners, they would not be justified in acting upon the Report without satisfying themselves that the recommendations of the Commissioners were well founded. Knowing the extreme anxiety of Parliament and of the public to ascertain the results of the Commission, the Government had thought it their duty to lay the Report upon the Table; but their Lordships would not expect Government to take any other steps till they and Parliament had an opportunity of examining the evidence on which the Report was founded. Some delay had taken place in the printing of the evidence, in consequence of the pressure of business in the printing offices at the present moment; but he could assure the noble Lord that as soon as possible it would be laid before the House, and that, whenever Her Majesty's Government came to a determination as to what course ought to be taken in reference to this important question, they would lose no time in communicating that determination to their Lordships.

Lord BROUGHAM thought nothing could be more satisfactory than the answer

which had just been given, that Government should take time to deliberate on a great practical question, affecting the interests of generations yet unborn as well the present. He hoped time would not only be given to Government and Parliament to consider this question, but also to engineers and scientific men, because it was a mistake to suppose that any others could so well judge of such a question as this.

LORD HATHERTON expressed his satisfaction at the mode in which the noble President of the Board of Trade had answered the question. Their Lordships must all feel the necessity of great caution and of time being taken to consider fully this matter. They should bear in mind that this Commission was adopted on the recommendation of those who had a direct interest in disparaging the broad gauge; that gauge had been supported by a great mass of evidence, and he had no doubt that had the case been reversed in reference to the extent of the two gauges already laid down in the country, there would have been a decision in favour of the broad gauge. He would impress upon their Lordships the necessity of maintaining the principle of competing lines between all great towns in the kingdom. For example, was it right that the railway communication from London to the great towns of Lancashire, with Staffordshire between, should be in the hands of one company—the London and Birmingham, or of companies amalgamated together? It was impossible the public interest could be secured without due competition. There must be competition; and while so much power was in the hands of one great individual, acquired no doubt by excellent talent and industry, the Government and the Legislature ought to be cautious about these proceedings, and narrowly to watch the Railway Bills presented to Parliament.

EARL GREY observed, that the Motion for an Address, in consequence of which the Gauge Commission was appointed, was by no means supported exclusively by those who had a strong interest in favour of the narrow gauge, as the noble Lord (Lord Hatherton) supposed. He himself took part in supporting it; but he was at that time in favour of the broad gauge. It was thought, that before railroads were carried further, it was important to have it investigated by competent authority, whether great public inconvenience would not arise from a diversity of gauge, and if so, what measures ought to be taken to guard against the inconvenience. That proposal was made without any preconceived opinion on one side or the other. The Commissioners had very ably discharged their duty, and, as it seemed to him, the report was a very valuable document, and founded only upon public considerations. He would just add, that it was of importance that the decision of the Government and of Parliament should be known as soon as possible.

LORD HATHERTON explained, that if the Commission was not proposed by parties interested in either gauge, it arose out of a decision of the other House in favour of the broad gauge in a particular case.

FISHERY PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND) BILL.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, briefly called the attention of the House to the importance of encouraging the fisheries of Ireland, and thereby further developing its resources, and increasing employment. Grants were proposed to be made by Government to the extent of three-fourths of the expense of constructing fishery piers and harbours, where the Board of Works thought the advance advisable; 50,000*l.* would be in the first instance appropriated to this object, and if that sum should be found insufficient, he believed they would be disposed to advance more.

LORD MONTEAGLE agreed in the importance of the measure, particularly at that moment, and gave full credit to the Government for the spirit in which this and similar measures were introduced; he hoped they would be received favourably in Ireland, and that private individuals would come forward to second the endeavours of the Government to give immediate employment to the poor. One word, however, with regard to the Board of Public Works. That Board had given great satisfaction to the public; but it owed its success mainly to the spirit, and skill, and unquestionable integrity of his gallant friend, Sir J. Burgoyne. For the last sixteen years, in consequence of the confidence felt in it, the Government and Parliament had cast upon it every duty which they knew no other way of executing. Now, this was over-weighting a good horse. His gallant friend, too, was now no longer connected with the Board; but he (Lord Monteagle) should be sorry to speak in the slightest degree to the disparagement of his very excellent successor, Colonel Jones. Still, steps must be

taken to strengthen the Board; and then, what could be more useful than to place at their disposal competent engineers, to direct not only their own works, but subsidiary works, which landed proprietors would be willing to undertake, if they had a little direction and advice?

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, he should be happy to vote for this and any other measures which might come before their Lordships, costly as those measures might be, which might have the effect of giving employment to their fellow-subjects in Ireland, and permanently improving that country. Ireland might, and would, if a sufficient stimulus were given, produce a great deal more than hitherto it had, and, by improving the land, permanent employment would be given to the people. Whatever might be said of their Lordships, they were all of them deeply interested in the welfare of that country.

Bill read 2ª.

GAME LAWS BILL.

LORD DACRE moved the Second Reading of a Bill for the further amendment of the laws in England relative to Game. His Lordship observed, that for these thirty years it had been to him a matter of deep interest and regret to perceive the condition in which the lower orders—particularly the agricultural body—had been placed by the mode in which the Game Laws were executed. Thirty years since, however, the absurdities and incongruities were more prominent than at present; an individual who had personal property to the extent of millions was not allowed to possess himself of a head of game except by present, and a man could not appoint a gamekeeper on his own land except in certain cases of manorial right. Absurdities of that kind had been removed, he might take the liberty of saying, subsequently to the Report of the Committee for which he moved, which Committee investigated the law upon the subject, and particularly with reference to the question whether game did not belong to the possessor of the land, *ratione soli*. The Committee to which he had referred sat in 1816; and, in 1819, he (Lord Dacre) introduced a Bill into the other House founded on the principle that game was the property of the possessor of the land. If the possession of land gave the property in the game taken on the land, and no one but the possessor of the land could sell that game, surely they ought not, by fiscal regulations, to admit a simple license as authority for selling game, without its being accompanied by some other regulation proving the game to have come from the possessor of some land. The object of the present Bill was to cut off, if possible, the poacher from any intercourse with the licensed dealer, and therefore the first clause proposed that it should not be lawful for any person, except a licensed dealer in game, to sell game to any licensed dealer in game, unless such person should be the lord or lessee of a manor or reputed manor, or should be the gamekeeper of such lord or lessee acting on the account and with the written authority of such lord or lessee, or should be the owner or occupier of, say, ten or fifteen acres, as it was not his (Lord Dacre's) wish to require for this purpose any extensive possession of land. The Bill would also require the dealer in game to keep a book, in which he should be required to enter the day and month of the year on which he should purchase any game, together with the number and description of such game, and the name and residence of the person of whom he should so purchase it. This was the principal provision of the Bill, for the purpose of putting an end to the practice of poaching, so injurious to the rural population of the country. Having thus taken means to secure this species of property in the possessor or occupier of the soil, he thought it incumbent to introduce some arrangement to reimburse, as far as possible, any damage done to property by the game belonging to a neighbouring occupier. One of the clauses of the Bill, therefore, contained a provision enabling magistrates at petty sessions to order, on complaint being made, an investigation into the amount of damage done by game to the complainant's property, and to make award of compensation. These were the principal points of the measure, which might more properly be called an amendment of the 1st and 2d William IV. He could not but entertain a sanguine expectation—provided the difficulties which he proposed were interposed between the poacher and the licensed dealer, and provided the remedy which he recommended for giving damages, where injury had been done by the excessive quantity of game should be agreed to—that those enactments would smooth the irritation, and remove much of the practical evil by which the country continued to be injured, little less than it was before the introduction of the 1st and 2d William IV.

LORD CAMOYS objected strongly to the

whole of the Bill. He thought that it would be extremely bad policy to make the Game Laws more restrictive than they were at present. By the present law no person could sell game who had not a certificate; but the Bill of the noble Lord proposed to confine the limits still more, by insisting upon the possession of a certain number of acres. The 7th Clause, relative to reimbursement for damage done by game, he strongly objected to, as calculated to lead to great confusion and acrimony among neighbouring landowners. The 9th Clause of the Bill repealed that portion of the 1st and 2d William IV., which gave half the penalty to informers. That he regarded as a useful part of the existing law, which ought not to be repealed. He, therefore, objected to that clause, and must repeat his opposition to the Bill altogether.

Lord BROUGHAM would support the second reading, on the ground that the existing law was certainly capable of amendment—an observation which, in his opinion, also applied to the Bill of his noble Friend.

The Duke of RICHMOND said his object in rising was simply to contradict a statement which he understood had been made with regard to himself—that he had paid large sums of money by way of compensation for damage done by his game. He could only say that he had never paid one single farthing for any such purpose; because, since he had been in the possession of landed property, he had invariably destroyed every hare and rabbit upon it, regarding them as real vermin, which, whilst they prevented the farmer from properly cultivating his land, inflicted at the same time a serious injury upon the landowner, inasmuch as they barked many of his most valuable trees.

Lord HATHERTON said, that he also, in consequence of the recommendation of the noble Duke who had just sat down, had commenced the destruction of hares and rabbits, and that he had succeeded almost in exterminating them. He could scarcely exaggerate the satisfaction which had resulted from that course, both to himself and to his tenants.

Lord ASHBURTON recommended that hares should be taken entirely out of the class of game. If that were done, he thought that they would get rid of all the complaints which were now made against the Game Laws; and he should take the liberty at some future stage of the Bill to submit a clause with that particular object in view. At present he should support the second reading.

Bill read 2ª.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 24, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1°. Joint Stock Banks; Election Notices (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. By Sir Edmund Filmer, from Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, of the Borough of Gravesend, for returning a Member to Parliament.—By Sir Charles Coote, Mr. Colvile, Mr. Beckett Denison, and Sir Edmund Filmer, from various places, against a Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against, and by Mr. Wilshere, from Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Great Yarmouth, in favour, of the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By several hon. Members, from a number of places, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Sir Robert Peel, from the President and Members of the American Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool, for a speedy Adjustment of the proposed Commercial Policy.—By the O'Conor Don, from Inhabitants of Castlerea, for a Repeal of the Stamp Duties Assimilation Act.—By Sir Robert Price, from Inhabitants of the City of Hereford, for Reduction of duty on Tea and Sugar.—By Mr. Duncan, from Shipowners of the Port of Dundee, for Reduction of Duty on Timber.—By Mr. Beckett Denison, from Farmers and others, of the Township of Cononley, complaining of unequal Rating.—By Mr. Baine, Mr. Wilson Patten, and Sir George Strickland, from various places, for Remission of Sentence upon William S. Ellis.—By Mr. Walker, from Clergymen and Dissenting Ministers of the Parish of Keighley, for limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By several hon. Members, from a great number of places, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against Enrolment of Militia.—From Members of the Congregation of the Wesleyan Chapel, Bexhill, for Suppression of Promiscuous Intercourse.—By Mr. Fox Maule, from the Presbytery of Jedburgh, against Licensing Toll Houses (Scotland) for the Sale of Spirituous Liquors.

PRINTING PAPERS.

Sir ROBERT INGLIS moved, that a Standing Committee of sixteen Members be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in the direction of the library, and to whom shall be referred all matters relating thereto.

Mr. HUME suggested, that this Committee should be empowered to direct that documents laid before that House be printed in octavo instead of folio. At all events, a trial of the kind might be made, and the convenience of all parties thus consulted.

Sir R. INGLIS doubted whether it came within the object he had in view.

Sir G. GREY hoped that the matter would not be lost sight of by the Printing Committee. He had seen the Sanatory Reports published by private parties in a very cheap and popular shape, with good paper and type: the octavo form was much less bulky and more port-

able, and by increased circulation much good might often be done. The only material objection he had heard stated was, that tabular returns required folio pages; but the truth was, that if those returns were folded, they would easily be adapted to a smaller size. He did not see why the question should not be brought before the Committee now to be appointed, and they might consider also the point of sending documents of the kind by post.

Dr. BOWRING referred to the interchange of documents established between the two Houses of Parliament and the Chamber of Peers and Deputies in France: the same satisfactory course had been pursued with regard to Belgium; and he saw no reason why the library of the House might not thus be enriched from America and other countries. Most valuable information would thus be placed within the reach of all Members. He also noticed the proposition of the French Government in 1832, respecting an interchange of all the chief works printed in that country and in this, which had led to the negotiation of a treaty, which Talleyrand had called the only intellectual treaty in existence. Even if war were to break out between Great Britain and France, he (Dr. Bowring) saw no ground for interfering with such a convention, which might produce a new era in national feeling.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER did not wish now to enter into the large question, but to express an opinion that nothing should be done by the Committee that was not submitted to the House. There were practical difficulties in the way of making the change as regarded Parliamentary and other documents, which were greater than perhaps many hon. Members supposed.

Committee appointed.

COMMERCIAL POLICY—CUSTOMS—CORN LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE (TENTH NIGHT).

Mr. M. J. O'CONNELL resumed the Adjourned Debate, saying, he was not ashamed to acknowledge that his opinions had undergone a considerable change within the last few months. On several occasions he had supported propositions brought forward by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. Villiers) with a view to the adoption of a moderate fixed duty, which then seemed to him the best mode of settling the question, at least for many years. He now frankly avowed that in his opinion the best course for the agricultural and all other interests was to enact the speedy and total abolition of duties on the import of food. His individual opinions were of little importance; but as he represented a large constituency he might perhaps be allowed to state his reasons for the change his opinions had undergone. He would first advert to the origin of the recent and prevailing alarm in Ireland. In the middle of October the disease in the potato crop showed itself extensively, and in the latter end of that month an expectation was general that an opening of the ports and a perfectly free importation of grain would be ordered by the Queen in Council. It was not, however, until Ministers met, and the proposition of the right hon. Baronet was unfortunately rejected, that a cry was got up—a cry of a most strange character. That cry was that the threatened danger had been exaggerated for party purposes; that the alarm of famine was, in fact, a party alarm, in order to bring into office the noble Lord the Member for London and his adherents. Even the high character and moderate views of the Duke of Leinster did not secure him and others of the Dublin Mansion-house Committee from the imputation that they were anxious and unscrupulous partisans of the Whigs. The effect was most disastrous, for many men who until then were ready to press upon Government the necessity of taking steps to join in subscriptions for the importation of foreign food, began honestly to doubt as to the reality and extent of the evil. He must make one honourable exception—the Protestant Clergy; they never doubted—they never joined in the cry: on the contrary, they gave statements of the disease in their districts which were unbiassed and exaggerated, acting from that pure motive of charity and benevolence which had raised their character very much, even among those who were opposed to them in faith. What was the state of Ireland now? Descriptions had been given on former nights by the First Minister of the Crown, confirmed by facts adduced by the hon. and learned Member for Cork; nevertheless, the right hon. the Recorder of Dublin had maintained that a system of gross exaggeration on the subject prevailed. If such were the truth, why had the right hon. Gentleman not, as his duty required, pointed out the exaggerations? The right hon. Gentleman had not brought forward a particle of evidence; and he (Mr. M. J. O'Connell) begged to tell the right hon. Gentle-

man and the House, that boldness of assertion would not pass for proof. He hoped that the hon. and gallant Member who cheered the observation would also bear it in mind. The truth was, that the danger in Ireland was most imminent. Some had contended that it was only a temporary emergency, and that a temporary emergency ought to be met by a temporary remedy. But there was every reason to fear that the emergency was not temporary; that the crop of next year would be infected; and that the disease might be permanent. If, however, it were certain that the crop and harvest next year would be abundant, still it ought to be remembered that there was no security against the return of the disorder. That consideration had much tended to produce the change that had taken place in his opinions; for he had asked himself this question—Why are the people of Ireland to be dependent on an article of food so peculiarly liable to disorder and failure? It was peculiarly liable, first, because it was a root, and it was often impossible to know that it was infected; and next, because the disease was a new one, and little, if at all, understood. The conclusion to which he came was, that the sooner all laws restricting the importation of the food of the people were repealed, the better for all classes of the community. He wished, therefore, that the proposal of the right hon. Baronet had been to do away with the Corn Laws at once; and if he (Mr. M. J. O'Connell) supported the Motion as it stood, it was only because it seemed under all circumstances the most effectual and speedy means of putting an end to an evil. Why, he would ask, had potatoes become the almost universal food of the peasantry in Ireland, and the general food of the lower orders in the south of England? The great, he did not say the sole cause was, the high price of bread-corn. Fixty or sixty years ago, the use of potatoes was by no means so common in Ireland: in some of the more remote districts, oatmeal was nearly as much employed for food as in Scotland. The high price of bread-corn had constantly tended to make the great body of his fellow countrymen dependent for subsistence on this most precarious article. He felt it his duty to do all in his power to render a supply of more nutritious food accessible to the working classes. The House had, however, been told that the repeal of the Corn Laws would be injurious to the lower orders, especially in Ireland; and it was urged that the present system was mainly valuable to labourers and tenant-farmers. That they were so valuable might, in his opinion, be answered in a single word; and that word was—Ireland. Had the Corn Laws been of service to the labourers and tenant-farmers there? Look at the destitution among the working classes in Ireland. The truth was that the Corn Laws were of no value to the labouring classes. It was admitted that improvements must be made in agriculture to meet the change; and he defied any man to show that such improvements would not necessarily give additional employment to the working classes; and the consequence of additional employment would be increased comfort and amelioration of condition. As to the tenant-farmers, he begged hon. Members to bear in mind that profit did not always depend upon price; that the profits of the tenant-farmer might be higher even if the price of corn were lower. Comparing the last three years with the three years preceding 1842, it was obvious that a comparatively low price was more profitable. The tenant-farmers had been in a better condition during the last three years, when corn was cheap, than in the previous three years when corn was dear. Much, of course, depended upon the prosperity of the consumers—on the prosperity of the home market—the manufacturers. The very circumstances of the increase of population in the Empire, which was most likely to continue, would of itself afford security against any considerable fall of price. The experience of the past had taught him to distrust the predictions of ruin in which alarmists dealt whenever a change of system was proposed; and the Vice President of the Board of Trade (Sir G. Clerk) had alluded to some of those predictions last night. One of them respected the introduction of swine when the Tariff was reduced in 1842. It had been calculated by some of the alarmists that no fewer than three millions and a half of swine would be imported; but the number really brought into the country had been ridiculously small. The prophecies of these gentlemen reminded him of the prophecies of a certain lady of old: it was decreed that she should prophesy truly, and not be believed; but of the Corn Law alarmists it seemed to be determined that they should prophesy falsely, but find people foolish enough to trust them. The hon. Member read an extract from a recent copy of the *Dublin Evening Mail* respecting the number of sheep sold and remaining unsold at Ballinas-

loe fair in 1842, 1843, and 1844, showing a regular increase both in number and price. He hoped, therefore, that farmers would be governed by experience, and not allow themselves to become the victims of a panic. The right hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Labouchere), when in office in 1840, had brought in a Bill to allow the introduction into Ireland of foreign flour upon the same terms as into England. It was opposed by some Members of the present Government; and Sir J. E. Tennant, in a speech crammed with statistics, proved to demonstration, as was thought and said by some, that the millers of Ireland would be ruined if the measure passed. In 1842 the right hon. Baronet altered the Corn Laws, and among his alterations was one by which foreign flour might be introduced into Ireland exactly on the terms proposed two years before by the right hon. Member for Taunton. It was, of course, supported by the Opposition side of the House, though not without some taunts against Ministers for silently adopting in office a scheme they had resisted in opposition; and what had been the result? The result was, that in spite of this Bill, which was to ruin the millers of Ireland, the importations of flour into this country from Ireland had constantly and most importantly augmented.

In 1842 had been imported	314,311	cwts.
In 1843	773,463	"
In 1844	839,567	"
In 1845	1,422,379	"

Thus this ruined interest in the course of four years had quadrupled the amount of its importations of flour into England. How had the arguments on this subject been met? Scraps from newspapers and *centos* from *Hansard* afforded no grounds for debating a great national question. The Recorder for Dublin, quoting Lord Mansfield, had said that the worst of precedents were established from the best motives; but the agricultural interest, if they could learn anything, must have learnt since 1829 that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would never consent to sacrifice national objects to party consistency. They were, therefore, forewarned of the present crisis; but, nevertheless, they had placed him again at their head, knowing that, under like circumstances, he would act in the like way. They had thus set a bad precedent from the best motives, and they must now expect to find it used against themselves. What had happened only last year on the subject of the grant of Maynooth? Hon. Members on the other side of the House supported the proposition, because it was introduced by the right hon. Baronet, though they would have opposed it had it been brought forward by the noble Lord the Member for London. After that, what right had they to attack the right hon. Baronet for his conduct upon this question? Did they wish to set the precedent again? There was no doubt that when this debate was over, they would again become the humble servants of the right hon. Baronet. In 1829, *nusquam tuta fides* was the exclamation; yet they had restored to him all their confidence: again *nusquam tuta fides* would be the cry, and again they would submit themselves to his mercy. What could they do without him? Whom could they put in his place? Lists of new sets of Ministers had been circulated, but they only seemed worthy of the satirical pages of the admirable *Punch*. On this point he might quote to the House a passage from the posthumous pamphlet of the Rev. Sidney Smith:—

"And let me beg of my dear Ultras not to imagine that they can survive for a single instant without Sir Robert—that they could form an Ultra Tory Administration. Is there a Chartist in Great Britain who would not, upon the first intimation of such an attempt, order a new suit of clothes, and call upon the milkman and baker for an extended credit? Is there a political reasoner who would not come out of his hole with a new Constitution?"

After reading the words of so eminent a man, he was unwilling to add anything of his own, since it must appear to vast disadvantage; but he would ask whether there was a bear on the Stock Exchange who would not realize large profits under such a Minister, or a stockholder who would not be a sufferer? If he (Mr. M. O'Connell) wished to see great changes accomplished, his earnest desire would be that the right hon. Baronet should be thwarted, and that his present adversaries should be compelled to form a Ministry of their own. In his speech a few nights ago, the hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. S. O'Brien) had had recourse to a fallacy, which run through all he said: it was when he talked of protection as valuable to the working classes. He assumed that the existing laws afforded them real protection; but he supported the present measure because he felt convinced that that, and that only, would afford them real and effectual protection. It would protect them against extravagantly high prices—against scarcity of food—against a reduction of wages—against want of em-

ployment—against, in short, all the evils incident to the present system. It was very well for agriculturists to talk of their anxiety for the welfare of the lower orders; but true philanthropists were those who, by unshackling commerce, gave industry employment. It was far better that the industry and energy of our own country should walk forth in its own strength, than that they should be supported by legislation in an enfeebled and ricketty existence. He did not believe that the labouring classes would ever again call for such protection as they had enjoyed under the Corn Laws—not even the stentorian voice of the hon. Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand) would be able to raise that cry among them. If they did, it could be in the same spirit that the graphic wit of a former age described the ignorant crowd exclaiming, "Give us back our eleven days." If any man had eloquence to reverse in the nineteenth the folly of the eighteenth century, it must be some such overpowering orator as the individual to whom he had alluded. For these reasons he supported free trade and free imports, which he believed essentially the same; he believed the cause he advocated just and righteous, and that formed not the least of the reasons which would induce him to give the measure before the House, not a lukewarm and a grudging, but a zealous and a cordial support.

Colonel CONOLLY said, he entirely agreed in the assertion of a right hon. Friend of his (Mr. Shaw) that the evils arising from the partial failure of the potato crop in Ireland, had been infinitely exaggerated. Accounts from various parts of the country, and his own acquaintance with its condition, especially in those districts with which he was connected, enable him to state this decidedly. He hoped that he need not declare how heartily he desired that all legitimate relief might be afforded to the Irish people in their present position; or that the whole course of his life presented sufficient evidence of his being utterly incapable of insensibility as to the miseries of his fellow countrymen. But he had listened attentively to the debate, without being able to discern the slightest connection between the measure before the House, and the potato deficiency. The evils arising out of that deficiency would, in the common course of events, continue but four months; while the measure of the Minister could not come fully into operation before the expiration of three years. Thus the two affairs, so anxiously attempted to be associated, were, in fact, entirely unconnected. He could not understand what on earth they had to do with the matter; and assuredly the Irish peasantry would be extremely ill off if they waited for relief until the consummation of the Ministerial measures. The perilous experiments about to be entered on by the Government, would have most injurious effects, he thought, upon the Empire at large; but would peculiarly affect that part of it from which he came, and he must consequently give it the utmost opposition which it was in his power to present to it. It was his opinion that it would immensely aggravate all the evils that existed in Ireland—that it would degrade and depress the condition of the people lower than at present. There could be no doubt that cheap bread and low wages were synonymous terms. The measure was first put forward professedly with the object of enabling the manufacturer to compete with the foreigner by lowering wages; and though opinions had changed in some quarters as to the measure, it was the same "wolf in sheep's clothing" as had originally been detected and exposed. The present Premier had, on his first entrance into office in 1842, proposed a measure which had alarmed and injured the agricultural interest to a certain extent; but of course the right hon. Baronet had submitted it to the House in its brightest colours and its fairest form, and enforced it especially by the assurance that the agricultural interest should retain an adequate amount of protection. Now Members opposite taunted the agricultural Member with having supported that measure of the new Tariff. No doubt they had so supported it; and he for one had frankly confessed that he had gone as far as he could, and a good deal against his inclination, for the purpose of supporting the right hon. Baronet. Of course he was the more mortified with his present position; for now he found that he had been induced thus to yield to a measure which had proved the precursor of another, the effects of which could not be but absolutely ruinous to the industrious classes generally, destructive not merely to agriculture, but to our home market in general, and inconsistent with the welfare of the whole Empire in all its relations at home and abroad. The agricultural interest had behaved with manly generosity, and had pursued a perfectly disinterested

course in taking the minimum of the protection they considered necessary for the national welfare; and they had effectually vindicated themselves from the charge of a selfish regard for "class interest," and all the other opprobrious accusations hurled against them, in default of argument, by their opponents. After the measure of 1842 came the Canada Corn Bill, as to which he could not help observing, that the effects of the clandestine introduction of American grain into Ireland had been most injurious to the Irish millers. But when that measure was introduced by the able and statesmanlike arguments of the then Secretary for the Colonies (Lord Stanley), it was agreed to as designed to extend the trade in corn merely with our Colonies, which produced no more grain than our increasing population required. And it had been supported indeed, with the very view of preventing the influx of corn from other parts of the world, and as giving a just and proper preference to the productions of our own colonists, and thus extending the market for our manufactures. And though the agriculturists were accused of legislating for "class interests," he could declare that a main motive for agreeing to the Canada Corn Bill was, the desire to promote our trade with our Colonies; and to keep the benefit of our trade to them, instead of wildly, rashly, extravagantly endeavouring to extend it indiscriminately with all the world —with friends and enemies — with the States of liberal or of restrictive policy— with those who had and with those who had not manifested any intention of reciprocating our advances to increased commercial intercourse—with all equally and alike—even with such as had resisted all diplomatic endeavours to promote the reception of our produce. So entirely had there been an absence of all disposition, on the part of foreign nations, to reciprocate our "free trade," that many of them had actually increased their restrictions in proportion as we adopted a more liberal commercial policy. The hon. Member (Mr. Cayley), whose profound thought on this question was so well known, had ably argued that the manufacturing interests were "standing in their own light" in clamouring for a free trade: and that cheap bread and low wages were inseparable. The home market must be the main mart for our manufactures; and it was the most rash and inconsiderate thing in the world to rush into a course ruinous to that market, in the vain hope of securing markets in countries which had long experienced the advantages of a restrictive system for the fostering of their own manufactures. It was said on the other side, what had agriculture received from protection? He should like to know what good the projected measure could possibly do to that interest? The great evil to be met and remedied was, deficient or unremunerating labour. And the present measure would displace agricultural produce at least to the extent of one-fourth. Such must be the result when the price of wheat was reduced from 56*s.* to 30*s.* per quarter. When it was to be remembered, that the main resource of Ireland was the sale of her agricultural produce, it might be imagined that whatever causes of distress or discontent at present existed in that country, would be as nothing compared with the wretchedness and ruin likely to result from this measure. It appeared that the recent imports of agricultural produce from Ireland into this country had quadrupled those of former years. When it was asked then, what had protection done for agriculture, it might be answered that here alone was evidence of no inconsiderable result. What was the origin of all capital but protection? What encouraged the accumulation of capital by means of energy and enterprize, but protection to the investments of capital? Protection had promoted the growth of capital, and had developed its resources and its results; and this was the real reason why high wages had temporarily coexisted with low prices—an anomalous state of things. However, the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had endeavoured to show that high wages and low prices would exist concurrently: they might for a short time; but that they should do so permanently, was utterly inconceivable and impossible. The right hon. Baronet had most incorrectly attributed to the measures he had introduced, the prosperity of recent years. But it was incontestable that the farmer, the artificer, the tradesmen, each and all, were entitled to protection for their industry, their capital, and their enterprize; and were entitled to demand it of the State to which they paid taxes, to which they owed loyalty, and to the resources of which they contributed so much. And to say that such a natural, indefeasible claim to protection should be disregarded—it was monstrous! "It is," exclaimed the gallant Gentleman, "unchristian! It is intolerable! My opinion may

be sneered at as 'sentiment,' or 'selfishness,' and may be overwhelmed with such opprobrious epithets; but while I have a soul in my body, I will not consent to inflict such frightful evils on so many of my fellow-countrymen!" The measure would not benefit the interests it peculiarly professed to profit. Protection was the natural and bounden duty of the State, considered in connection with our fiscal as well as our commercial system; it was a source of revenue and means of enabling the nation to bear its burdens; it was intimately associated with all our financial relations; and it was the opinion of such able monetary authorities as Lord Ashburton, that the result of this measure would be to reduce the resources of the nation by at least twenty-five per cent. The burdens of Ireland in particular had been recently increased, as by poor rates, &c., and the present measure would greatly diminish the ability of the people to meet these burdens. Could it be supposed that the evils of Ireland would be assuaged or lightened by the harsh grinding hand of a hard political economy? He was satisfied that the agriculture, both of Ireland and of England, would, if justly protected, keep pace with the increasing demands of the population. This argument, as applied to Ireland, had a strong analogy to the argument as applied so ably by the hon. Member for Liverpool (Sir H. Douglas), to the case of the Colonies. The evil and the peril were equally obvious in both cases, of alienating and estranging our fellow subjects in other parts of the Empire. It was far wiser to conciliate their affections by a just and equitable protection, securing them our own markets in preference to foreigners. Whereas, the policy of the present measure consisted in throwing open our ports to all the world; and giving the benefit of our markets to the subjects of every nation but our own. The inevitable effect of this suicidal course was, the irretrievable injury of those invaluable interests, our shipping and our commercial marine, on which our maritime supremacy so much depended. The former and the wiser policy of the country had been, on the other hand, to foster these important and sister interests of agriculture and shipping—the sources of our subsistence and our security. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had, in his amended version of the imaginary colloquy of the hon. Member for Northampton with the farmer, represented the propriety of the landlord's telling his "good fellow" of a tenant that his landlord would lend him money wherewith to promote improvements in cultivation, and increase the produce of the farm from three quarters per acre to five. But the right hon. Baronet had omitted to tell his imaginary farmer that the five quarters would realize no more than the three had done; for five quarters at 30*s.* would not fetch so much as three at 56*s.* It was a favourite mode of expression on the other side to urge, that the injuries arising from the Ministerial measure would be but temporary. He for one disputed the right of the Legislature to inflict severe injury, however temporary, on large classes of the people. To do so was to corroborate the theories of those who agreed that the House did not represent all classes of the community. He hoped that it did, and that its sympathies and its care would be equally extended to all; and for this reason he earnestly implored of the House to pause before they rushed on to such a perilous experiment as was now proposed, which was certain to be injurious to all classes but especially to those whom it must be the object of every sensible man to protect.

Viscount INGESTRE felt that an apology was due from him to the House for venturing to trespass upon its attention when a subject of such importance was before it; but its very importance must be his apology. He had also another excuse for addressing it; for he found that the parties with whom he had generally acted, and whom he had always been proud to follow, had gone over to the enemy, and that they were without a leader. It was necessary, in these days of general apostacy, that each person should himself declare his own opinions. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at the commencement of that which he would allow him to call his most extraordinary speech, some nights ago, adduced two or three tests by which he tried his own sincerity. He (Lord Ingestre) gave him full credit for his sincerity; and, as he was bound to do so, he gave full credit to the sincerity of all who sat upon that bench. Still, he must be allowed to say, though he had no abandonment of political opinions to account for, he might adduce one test of his sincerity. He believed he might say that such test was to be found in a letter written by a noble relative of his (Earl Talbot)—by one of whom he must always speak with that respect and affection which he

must ever bear to that noble Lord. That was a letter which had been made a great deal of, because that noble Lord was one whose opinions were of great importance as those of an experienced agriculturist, and whose opinions must therefore be entitled to every weight and consideration that justly attached to his high character. But then he felt it due to that noble Lord, his noble relative, to say, that his opinions were not of recent date; he had not, like many of those in that House, changed his opinions under a very short notice. The opinions which his noble relative now expressed, had been entertained for many years; but, as he had referred to them, he would state the exact extent to which those opinions went. He had often heard that noble relative say that he thought the energies of Englishmen were so indomitable, and their industry so persevering, that they must come out of every difficulty, and eventually surmount every obstacle. That, then, was the extent to which his opinions went; but then he had no doubt, with the opinions his noble relative entertained, that he would give to Her Majesty's Government his support with respect to the measures they were now proposing. In the early part of this debate, he (Lord Ingestre) was very much struck with the observation of his right hon. Friend the Secretary at War, that this was not a question of principle—that it was ridiculous that such a sensation should be made throughout the country about that which was purely a fiscal and commercial question. He should like to know what question could be more a question of principle than this. Why it was the very principle on which this Parliament was elected. As to his (Lord Ingestre's) own individual election, he was not aware that he had at the hustings uttered a single word on the subject of protection or the Corn Laws; but he had done so on the previous occasion, and, therefore, he should think it highly dishonourable—he could not give it another name—if he did not (like the noble Lord who had lately resigned his seat in the House) consider that there was an understanding between him and his constituents on the question of protection. He was favourable to protection, and had he been struck with any remarkable conversion on that point, he should have felt it his duty, as a man of honour, to have resigned his seat. There had been some some resignations of seats on that principle. Other hon. Members had written to their constituents, half resigning their seats, and then taking advantage of circumstances. He could not, he must own, greatly approve of this conduct. Those who did it might reconcile it to their consciences; and their constituents, he had no doubt, would, at the fitting time, and the proper day, express their opinions on such conduct. They had also had manifestoes, or something very like them, from Ministers and others having a connexion with the Cabinet. He had recently seen, as no doubt many others had seen, a manifesto from the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland. Now, he could only look upon that as something like a declaration from the Government. In the principles announced in that document he could not coincide, and therefore could not give them his support. They had then had explanations from the free-trade Cabinet. When this question of free trade was first agitated in the Cabinet last November, as they had been told by the right hon. Baronet, he could not find many Members in his Cabinet to agree with him. Now, he thought that this House had a right to call upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and upon the noble Lord the Member for Monmouth, to explain to the House and to this country, why they rejoined the Cabinet, and were now ready to support measures, which, in November last, they thought to be so destructive to the interests of the country as to oppose them, and resign their posts into Her Majesty's hands. And now, in allusion to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would beg leave to ask him, if he recollected the address that was sent by the right hon. Baronet the Premier when he was very much in a similar situation to that which the right hon. Gentleman now held? He would ask him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) if he recollected what that right hon. Gentleman thought was consistent with his duty to do?—and no man who knew the right hon. Gentleman would not believe that he at all times acted in accordance with the convictions of his conscience. But the right hon. Gentleman was now in a very similar position to that which the right hon. Baronet occupied with regard to the Emancipation Bill; and how did the right hon. Baronet then act? In an address which he (Lord Ingestre) saw the other day in the papers, and which he believed to be true and genuine—an address from the right hon. Baronet to the electors of the University of Oxford, he thus expressed himself:—

"I cannot doubt that the resistance which I have hitherto offered to the claims of the Roman Catholics has been one of the main grounds upon which I have been entitled to the confidence and support of a very large body of my constituents; and, although I discontinue that resistance solely from the firm belief that perseverance in it would be not only unavailing, but would be injurious to those interests which it is my special duty to uphold, yet I consider myself bound to surrender to the University, without delay, the trust which they have confided to me."

He (Lord Ingestre) did think that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in a similar position with the right hon. Baronet. It seemed to him at least that he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was in a similar position, and he should be very glad to hear from him why he did not pursue a similar course of conduct. He had now, he must say, reason to quarrel with this measure of the Government; first, for the time at which it had been thought proper to introduce it. What were the circumstances of the country when it was introduced? It was almost impossible, in a debate which had been maintained for such a long time as the present, to say anything which had not been said before, and no doubt much better than he could hope to express it. Still, he must remark, that the period at which the measure had been introduced was most infelicitous. Ministers had found the country in a state of prosperity—there was full employment for labourers, and labour was highly remunerated—the labouring classes were in the enjoyment of more comforts of life than he had ever known since he had known any thing at all. He had no doubt that this prosperity had grown up and continued under protection. They had, to be sure, heard a great deal about famine and a disease in potatoes. He hoped it was idle in him, even though he belonged to such a maligned body as that of the agriculturists, to say, that for distress of any portion of the people he felt the deepest sympathy, and was ready to adopt any measures calculated to afford the most speedy and certain relief. But in looking at the Corn Market, as he found that of Liverpool described in the *Mark Lane Express*, of February 17, he saw the following:—

"A liberal supply of wheat and flour, and a moderate supply of oats and oatmeal, have arrived here since this day week from Ireland, with several parcels of grain coastwise; also 2000 quarters of wheat, with 1100 quarters of Indian corn from Trieste, and 200 quarters of beans from Egypt, but no grain or flour from America. The trade has been generally flat to-day. Sales of wheat have progressed slowly, and though choice qualities are held at last week's rates, all lower descriptions are 2*d.* per 70lb. cheaper than on this day se'nnight. Oats are 1*d.* per bushel and meal 6*d.* per load cheaper. Beans, peas, and other articles, slow of sale, and prices nominally the same as before. Flour also sells in retail at 1*s.* reduction. In bonded wheat nothing done. Of bonded flour a few hundred barrels are reported at 27*s.* per barrel. Barley almost unsaleable."

Now, he asked that House—he asked anybody who heard him, if this were like to famine staring them in the face?—first, a great quantity of corn was brought from Ireland—and then oatmeal, the natural substitute for the root that had perished, only bearing a declining price. But he found a similar decline in Mark Lane. How, he again asked, could they call that famine when they saw food with a tendency to decline in the price? The right hon. Baronet, in the course of the two or three powerful speeches he had made on this subject, made his principal argument to go upon this, that the measure now proposed by him was to be a final adjustment. What did the right hon. Baronet call a final adjustment? He thought that the right hon. Baronet, as a great many ladies had a fancy for making matches, so had he a fancy for making final adjustments. Where were these adjustments to end? Did he fancy that this adjustment, being once begun, he would not have to go to a greater extent with it. He warned the right hon. Gentleman—he warned the Government, that if they gave way to alarms and to fears that might be excited by the hon. Gentlemen who composed the League, they would be dragged from one point to another, until nothing should be left for them to guard, and nothing more to yield. This he was sure of, that when the right hon. Gentleman said that the day on which he announced that he abandoned protection was the happiest day of his life, that if his life were spared, and the system now adopted carried out to its full extent, the right hon. Gentleman would yet say, that instead of its being the happiest it was the most miserable in his life. At this stage of the debate he felt disinclined to enter into the general commercial part of the subject. They heard nothing then but of free trade. Now, what was free trade? The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government said that free trade was to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market; that as different countries produced different articles, the true policy was to allow every country to exchange its produce for ours. Now, he thought there was a pal-

pable fallacy in that statement of what was free trade; and his opinion was, that if we were to have free trade, it ought to be a free trade of this nature—to exchange the articles which we produced, for the articles which other countries could, and we could not, produce, and to afford protection to those articles which were equally produced by both countries, or, at any rate, to give such a protection as would allow both countries to be on an equality. That was a real, genuine, and impartial sort of free trade; not the one-sided free trade they would slip into if they adopted the right hon. Baronet's measure. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman the late Member for Westminster (Captain Rous) were now present, he (Lord Ingestre) would ask him, as he was a notoriously good handicapper, to handicap the different nations, and let them all start fair: then the agriculturists would be ready to unite with him for free trade. In the absence of that hon. Gentleman, perhaps his noble Friend the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) would undertake the office; but let them all start fairly, and then he would agree with his noble relative that this country, with its indomitable energy, and its numerous advantages, might successfully compete with the foreigner. Hitherto, however, we had always been met by hostile tariffs on the part of other countries. He would now refer to two periods of time, which exhibited results of a very remarkable character, in reference to the question of free trade. From the years 1832 to 1836 inclusive, the price of corn was notoreously cheap; so cheap, indeed, that the duty was very high, and no, or next to no corn was imported from abroad. Practically speaking, these were years of prohibition. And what did he find? Why, that in these three years the exports and imports increased to a considerable extent. But in the three succeeding years the price of corn was very high, the duty on importation was low, and the direct opposite results ensued; for the exports and imports were materially decreased. He had often heard those who were the advocates of protection described as monopolists. What was meant by the application of this term? Did they mean to call that a monopoly which was the means of employing four-fifths of the whole people? If foreign corn were admitted free of duty, it must have the effect of displacing British produce; and, as a matter of course, a great deal of the capital at present invested in the cultivation of the soil. This would lead to the destruction, in a great measure, of the home market, which Adam Smith said, with great truth, was worth all the others put together. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had stated that low prices and high wages often went together. Now, that might be very true; but, at the present moment, this state of things had arisen from extraordinary circumstances, the chief of which was the construction of railways, which had given quite a different complexion to the whole of the economical part of the question. But experience proved, and all political writers agreed, that, sooner or later, wages and the facility of getting food, were dependent upon each other. His own opinion was, that the present law had created great prosperity; but upon this point he observed a marked discrepancy in the speeches of two very high authorities: he alluded to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government and his right hon. Friend the Secretary at War. The right hon. Baronet said, that one of his reasons for altering his former opinions was the success of his measures in 1842. He said, "I have been wrong all my life. I think I have made a new discovery, and that my measures of 1842 did so much good that I am encouraged to go on in the same course." But what did the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War (Mr. S. Herbert) say? He said he had been a free trader in disguise for some years—ever since he had been in office; and notwithstanding the strong protective speech which he made upon his re-election, after being appointed to the office he so worthily filled, he now said the Corn Law of 1842 was a signal failure. Now, he (Lord Ingestre) should like to know which of these right hon. Gentlemen was right. Seeing that there had been greater steadiness of price under the existing system of Corn Law—that fluctuations in the price of corn had been less in this country since the Act of 1842 was in force, and less than in any other country; he could discover no reason for running away from the principle, however much they might think it necessary, as science advanced, gradually to remove protection. It had been said by the advocates of free trade, that foreign wheat could not be imported at so low a price as was stated by the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Hudson) the other night. He (Lord Ingestre) had heard it said that the wheat imported by the hon. Member was not of good quality. What was the

best test of that? Why the weight of the bushel; and the hon. Member assured the House that it weighed upwards of 61 lbs., which was a fair and proper weight for good grain. But upon this subject of the prices at which foreign wheat could be imported, he held in his hand a statement of the average prices of foreign corn in bond in the port of London, in the years extending from 1835 to 1845. In January, 1835, wheat was imported into the port of London (all charges being paid) at 22*s.* a quarter; in 1836, at 22*s.*; 1837, at 40*s.* [An hon. Member: Where from?] From all parts. It mattered not where from; his argument being that it came here cheap. In 1838 it was brought in at an average price of 25*s.*; in 1839, at 35*s.*; in 1843, at 29*s.*; in 1844, at 42*s.*; and in 1845, at 26*s.* a quarter. He contended, therefore, that foreign corn would come in at a lower rate than was represented by hon. Gentlemen opposite, who said that the agriculturists would still get a remunerative price, and that they need not be alarmed at the effect of the present measures. Though he regarded the question as one that concerned the whole country, he would just for one moment advert to the case of the landlord. It had been often said, that the Corn Law was peculiarly a landlord's question; but he had made a calculation which conclusively showed that this assertion was altogether erroneous. He took the average produce of an acre of wheat to be twenty-two bushels. Now, five bushels of wheat would give rather more than four bushels of flour, and a bushel of flour would give eighteen quartern loaves. So that an acre of wheat would furnish nineteen bushels of flour, or 340 loaves. Taking the loaf at sixpence, the produce of an acre of wheat in money would amount to 170*s.* He calculated the rent upon an average of the whole kingdom at 25*s.* an acre, the highest point at which it could be taken; and what, then, if they abolished the whole of the rent of the kingdom, would be the result? Why, that the consumers could not be benefited to a greater extent than one-sixth the price of the quartern loaf. Take the rents from the landlord, and how were they to live? How could they afford to expend money upon manufactures? And what would become of the home market? He objected to the measures under consideration, not merely on the grounds he had stated, but because he thought they would prove most injurious to Ireland. He could not conceive a more suicidal course, as far as that country was concerned, than to deprive it of the best market for its produce. He desired to know upon what ground Parliament was asked to do this, and to introduce foreign corn into Ireland. When he saw that Ireland was an exporting country in agricultural produce, what did he deduce from this state of things? Simply, that if they wanted corn there, they should cease exporting it; and if it were sent them from abroad, they would not have money to pay for it. In fact, he regarded the measures as a real and substantial injustice to Ireland, as well as to the Colonies, and more particularly Canada. It was only in 1843 that the Canada Corn Bill was passed into a law; the argument of the noble Lord the then Secretary for the Colonies (Lord Stanley), and of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government himself, being "You must confer this benefit on the Colony, because it is an integral part of the Empire." Well, having passed that measure, and opened the door for a most lucrative and important trade, they were now asked to place the Colony on the same footing as foreign countries. He gave the right hon. Baronet credit for being actuated by the purest motives; but when the right hon. Gentleman said he was above all party considerations, he begged to tell him that if he or any other man attempted to govern this country without party, he would signally fail. Such exhibitions as had been witnessed there of late were calculated very much to destroy the faith of the public in men who professed to be uninfluenced by party. He really felt distressed the other night, when he saw the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade (Sir G. Clerk) stand at the red box, and heard him contradict all the opinions he had before adduced on the other side of the question. He begged leave to ask the right hon. Gentleman, and also those hon. Gentlemen who had experienced these sudden and miraculous conversions, if they could put their hands on their hearts and say, that, if the right hon. Baronet had proposed an increase, instead of a diminution and abolition of protection, they would not have followed him in his course and given him their support. The noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Lord Morpeth) had given the aristocracy of the country some advice: he alluded to his noble Friends the Members for Stamford and Shropshire, whose names the noble Lord

said he was sorry to see allied with protection; thus implying that the aristocracy were setting their faces against the wishes of the people. Now, the aristocracy of this country were of so peculiar a nature, so mixed up with every institution of the country, and so mixed up with the affections of the people, that he was sure wrong motives would not be imputed to them in the course they felt it to be their duty to pursue. In this country the aristocracy enjoyed no immunities; but to all intents and purposes were, as he had said, mixed up with the people, to the benefit of both. If advice were needed in any quarter, he would give the noble Leaguer his advice. Without being chargeable with vanity, he might say that though the noble blood of "all the Howards" flowed in the noble Lord's veins, yet he had sprung from as ancient a root; and he would venture to tell the noble Lord and those who went with him, that if they would join such unconstitutional and revolutionary societies as the Anti-Corn-Law League, they set an example which ought to be a warning to all the members of the aristocracy. One word with regard to the disease of the potato before he resumed his seat. He held in his hand some specimens of young potatoes. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh, but it was an important fact that these potatoes had been produced from the eyes of diseased ones, and the grower was Mr. Chapman, a market gardener at Isleworth. He felt bound to mention this circumstance for encouraging those who possessed diseased potatoes to turn them to a beneficial purpose.

Mr. TRELAWNY was surprised at the extraordinary contrast between the letter of the noble Lord the Member for Newark and his recent speech. Why, from reading that letter, he concluded the noble Lord would of course support the Government; or that, if he did not, his only reason for opposing the Government would seem to be because he agreed with it. He believed the noble Lord to be a most benevolent person—he believed him possessed of considerable ability; and yet his conduct was difficult to reconcile with these qualities. The noble Lord admitted the frightful state of famine and disease expected to prevail in Ireland. He admitted the necessity of taking measures to diminish these dreadful visitations. He went even so far as to agree that the right hon. Baronet ought to have opened the ports, even in the autumn, when the danger was far less imminent: and yet now he was coolly going to vote that the consideration of these pressing matters should be put off till this day six months. And why? Because he had some objections to the political morality of a particular individual, whose fault, if it were one, was to be the cause of the suffering of millions of men. Why, the true course for the noble Lord to pursue, and the protectionists with whom he acted, though he did not agree with them, would be to move an Amendment that the operation of the Corn Law be immediately suspended. The hon. Member for Shrewsbury had certainly made a clever speech. He made an observation which the Members of the free-trade party must candidly admit to be just, viz., that while the League had been for years professing to educate the masses, it had really been educating itself. Yes; but it was educated at last. The hon. Member had said that they had constantly been shifting their grounds. True; but so had the protectionists. Feeling that it would not do any longer to fight under so exclusive a banner as that of protection to agriculture, they had chosen a new one in protection to native industry. But how could native industry be protected in the case of articles already competing, spite of heavy duties, with foreign goods in foreign markets? A bounty on exports would be necessary if protectionists would be consistent. Were they prepared for that? And if all were protected, what good was protection? The fact was, the hon. Member's argument failed, as he would do as a commercial Minister. Having so thoroughly and so enviably succeeded in a different line, it was a pity to see him frittering away his reputation in aspiring to be a statesman. The protectionist party had argued this question throughout as if it was simply a Corn Law question, and as if it was certain agriculture would be injured. Now he demurred to that. Supposing the agriculturists lost something by the removal of the duty on corn, would they gain nothing by reductions on other articles? The right hon. Baronet's proposal was not a corn measure, but a new Tariff. What was the use to farmers of the duty on maize? How did they benefit from the duty on brandy—on manufactured goods—on sugar? Again, different classes of farmers were protected to each other's injury. Of what use was the wheat duty to the grass farmer? Of what use was protection on cheese, butter, and cattle to the wheat farmer? He said that

hon. Members on the protectionist side of the House were a little unfair towards the Government on the subject of their change of opinion. They wholly forgot the tremendous responsibility which any body of men must be under who assumed to feed twenty-four millions of men. It was easy for those who were out of office, who had none of its cares and anxieties, who were not responsible for the preservation of internal peace, to talk loudly about principle, and the obligation of a rigid adherence to it. Then, besides being a little unfair, they were rather more illogical, because, after all, what did the quotings from *Hansard* and taunts of inconsistency mean? What was their real force and virtue? Why, simply this, that when a man had taken up an opinion, he was bound to be fanatical in maintaining it, although he conscientiously believed it to be unsound. Hon. Members seemed to be indignant that Government no longer assisted them in finding plausible defences of an untenable position; or was it that they could not forgive the implied reproach to themselves of the earlier conformity of others to rational opinions? If Government were supposed to have been guilty of deliberate falsehood in respect to the time of their asserted change of opinion, why did not some protectionist manfully say what he really meant? Was it like the characteristic courage of the English gentleman to rest content with insinuations? If, when a man at the head of a party deliberately announced an opinion and subsequently changed it, he was bound, according to what hon. Members seemed to imply, to affect adherence to it for party purposes: then the moral of all this was, that he who commenced by error should end in dissimulation—the very thing with which protectionists reproached Government. For his part, he thought there had been very adequate cause for the recent changes of opinion. In the abstract, the question had long been settled, and a very narrow induction was necessary, by way of experimental confirmation, when the abstract conclusion was in accordance with the practical. Besides, if Government were not convinced by any other evidence of the soundness of free-trade principles when applied in practice, could they have had higher grounds of conviction than were to be found in the speeches of protectionists during the last few months—speeches which the *Times* had been malicious enough to report in full? Could any sane man have remained protectionist who had carefully waded through the heavy dig of the speeches of England's Dukes? Why, had they not been by fortune raised far above want, their speeches could not but have raised the opinion that they were retained by the League! Indeed, so effectually had the Dukes argued in favour of free trade in their sneeringly ironical defence of protection, that when he saw them, inflated and floating about in the public gaze, over the agricultural districts, he concluded as a matter of course, that they were the pilot-balloons which were testing the current of popular opinion in favour of free trade. But seriously, some friend to aristocracies should warn those who stood highest among the Peers of the ultimate effects of their recent conduct. There was more involved in this question than a mere duty on a commodity. The successful maintenance of a one-sided law by a one-sided Parliament would involve a great constitutional question, and new agitation would commence, even amongst the middle classes, for further measures of organic change. If the existing form of government could be made permanently subservient to the purpose of a class, a practical demonstration would be afforded of an inherent vice in the Constitution itself; and no great grievance in this country would long want its League or Repeal Association, and, in fact, such bodies seemed necessary as indications of symptoms not otherwise easily detected in time. It was a pity to see an ancient aristocracy putting its power, its usefulness, its very existence, on an issue of rent! If it were to fall, one would have wished to give it credit for a Roman wish to fall with decency. Could the country afford to place all its intellect on the shelf?—at the present time, especially. Were they so sure of peace abroad? Were their Oregon negotiations in so satisfactory a state? Were they not at war in India? Could the country afford to trust itself to "all the talents" of all Dukes? If Government had all along deceived their party, how very innocent must the party have been to be so easily and so long taken in!—or was it that they were compelled to put up with the arch-deceiver, because they had no men fit to form a Cabinet? Was it that they could not pardon the head of the Government that he had so long been a standing reproach to their incapacity? They might depend upon it, even now, that something more was required to make a statesman besides successful vituperation. He could

have wished the change in the Corn Laws had been immediate and final. He thought it a pity that for three long years the duty should remain a monument reminding the people of the melancholy infatuation of an agricultural Parliament. His constituents held the same opinion, as they indicated in a petition presented a few days since. Much had been said of unconstitutional practices. Was it constitutional for a body of men to come into that House as the avowed delegates of one interest? Agricultural Gentlemen always talked (ay, and acted—witness their resignations) as if representation were particular, not general—as if they were returned to carry out a great agricultural job, instead of benefiting the nation as a whole. They fell into this error particularly when they accused Government of betraying the landed interest. For his part, he could only say that if the Government ever pledged itself to support, exclusively, the landed interest, such a pledge was void for its immorality. But it was said the League was unconstitutional. He flatly denied it, though he was not a member of that body. In what respect did it differ from other associations for bringing about elections, and which Conservatives in most counties belonged to, except in superior wealth, strength, numbers—and even, perhaps, intellect: and to what causes were its power and wealth due but to the existence of a grievance of such magnitude as to produce such results? The League did not buy votes. It merely indicated in what way the unrepresented intelligence of the country (unrepresented, because county Members seemed avowedly delegates of a class) might constitutionally influence opinion at future elections. Was it immoral to buy small estates in order to obtain a stake in the country? Immoral to indicate how the desire might be gratified? Besides, did it not raise the price of land, and benefit landlords? A learned Judge was reported to have pronounced the desire legitimate and commendable. He believed he was correct in stating that some of the leaders of the protectionists had talked of fighting the League with its own weapons. A noble individual was reported to have talked of opposing the Government factiously if necessary. Let Peers take counsel, before they set such examples. It were wise in those whose hereditary duty it was jealously to watch over the Constitution, to beware how they impotently bragged of their power to prostitute its functions to purposes which could not but seem suspicious to the uninstructed. He knew it was denied that rents were the objects of the Corn Law. But if it were said that food for the people was its real end, then how could men be induced to believe that the best method of keeping corn in was to pass a law to keep it out? This kind of argument would no longer do in towns, however it might go down with farmers' clubs and labourers' friend societies. In conclusion, he should only add that he should support the Government, only protesting against the incompleteness and want of finality of the measure they proposed.

Mr. PACKE said, the question now before the House was of such a nature that he could not content himself by giving a silent vote. It was a measure which, if passed into a law, would be ruinous to the best interests of the country; it would be most destructive in its results. It gave him great pain to be obliged to differ from an Administration which he had supported during his whole Parliamentary career. He did not wish to impute improper motives to the right hon. Baronet as to the introduction of the measures before the House, yet he could not help saying again, that they would be ruinous to the general interests of the country. But what principally startled him on the first day of the Session was, to hear the right hon. Baronet affirm that his present policy was a "Conservative policy." How he could address such language to the House, or how he could describe that to be a Conservative policy which principally originated in the continued agitation of the hon. Members for Durham and Stockport, he (Mr. Packe) could not conceive; an agitation which went on increasing from year to year, until it produced those effects which could not be too strongly deprecated. His opinion of the word "Conservative" was, that it meant fixed principles; for surely no one could for a moment imagine that its meaning was—principles ever varying, ever changing. Conservative did not mean that—it did not mean either the change of principle or the sacrifice of party. But it was stated that, as the measure before the House had the support of public opinion, that was quite sufficient; and it was wrong to ransack *Hansard* to ascertain what were the former views of those hon. and right hon. Members who now supported free trade. No doubt that would be a very desirable course for men who had no fixed principles; they would deprecate those

quotations which would not present a very gratifying contrast. But, however unpalatable, he would refer to some statements made in that House by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. On the 18th of May, 1841, the right hon. Baronet said—

"You ask me what I propose to do with reference to the Corn Laws. Sir, I will not shrink from the expression of my opinion. If I saw reason for changing my course I would do so, and frankly avow it. But I have not changed my opinion, notwithstanding the combination which has been formed against the Corn Laws; notwithstanding the declaration that either the total repeal or the substitution of a fixed duty for the present scale, is the inevitable result of the agitation now going forward. Notwithstanding this declaration, I do not hesitate to avow my adherence to the opinion I expressed last year."

Owing to that bold and honest declaration important results followed. Again, on the 7th of June, the right hon. Baronet declared that—

"While he left entirely with Her Majesty's Ministers all the responsibility of making an appeal upon the subject of the Corn Laws to the sense of the people, yet he must at the same time say that he was not prepared to offer the slightest obstruction in the way of Her Majesty's Government taking that course."

A dissolution took place, and at the commencement of the next Parliament the right hon. Baronet acceded to power as Her Majesty's Minister, with a majority of 91, which accession to power, by the aid of so large a majority, was to be mainly attributed to his declaration on the subject of the Corn Laws. And the right hon. Baronet, when about to propose some modifications and alterations in the Corn Laws, thus declared himself on the 9th of February, 1842—

"My belief and the belief of my Colleagues is, that it is important for this country—that it is of the highest importance to the welfare of all classes in this country—that you should take care that the main sources of your supply of corn should be derived from domestic agriculture."

Such was his declaration; and he laid it down as a general principle. And on the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, on the 12th of May, 1843, the right hon. Baronet had thus expressed himself:—

"I think that frequent alterations on laws of this kind are in themselves to be deprecated. I think also that the existing law offered as a compromise was a fair adjustment of the question. I believe that there was as willing and as cordial an assent given to it by the agricultural interest as could have been anticipated. I think they gave that assent upon the assumption and in the expectation that the law would not be again altered without good and sufficient reason."

Could words be stronger, and if the question were then adjusted, was it not then settled? Did not adjustment mean settlement? And when the right hon. Baronet stated "that there was as willing and as cordial an assent given to it by the agricultural interest as could have been anticipated," was not that "willing and cordial assent" given on the presumption and on the expectation that that "fair adjustment" would not be disturbed? Was it not on the assumption that the law would not be altered, at least without good and sufficient reasons. But while he could produce several other extracts from the declarations of the right hon. Baronet, to show his continued consistency on the subject of the Corn Laws, he would content himself with one more. On the 26th of June, 1844, the right hon. Baronet said—

"I defend protection to agriculture on the principle and to the extent I am bound to say that I have defended it before. I am about to pronounce no new opinions on this subject. I have a strong feeling that, speaking generally—and I am not now speaking of the amount of protection; I shall come to that presently—but speaking generally, I think the agriculture of this country is entitled to protection, and that it is so entitled to protection from considerations of justice as well as from considerations of policy. I do consider that there are special and peculiar burdens on agriculture. . . . . I ask you to look at the extent of capital employed in the cultivation of the soil—to look at the population of Ireland entirely depending on its agricultural produce—to see the amount of the supply of corn obtained from domestic agriculture, at least nine-tenths of the whole quantity consumed—and to look at the condition of the population employed in its culture. I am not prepared to alter the amount of protection determined upon two years ago, with the general goodwill and concurrence of the agricultural interest."

After such a declaration, was it not totally impossible that that House should be prepared to hear of those sweeping measures which were for the first time developed on the 22nd of January last? how could the right hon. Baronet state that he, and those who acted with him, could not be charged with having acted at variance with the "principles of a Conservative policy?" Having disposed of that subject, he would call attention to a few of the reasons which were offered for the introduction of the proposed measure by the right hon. Baronet; and the first and principal reason adduced was the failure in Ireland of the potato crop, upon which there were arguments in such abundance during the debate, that the subject became threadbare. But why should the failure of potatoes in Ireland go to overturn a system—go to over-

turn those fixed principles which existed for upwards of two hundred years—principles by the operation of which this country had so greatly prospered. It appeared to him perfectly impossible—he could hardly believe that such could be the reason of attempting to effect changes so strange, and which must be ruinous in their consequences. But, again, he was told—with what consistency he would leave others to explain—that the prosperity of the last three years justified further relaxation. But if the country had made those wonderful advances of which the right hon. Baronet spoke, was not protection the cause?—and protection being the cause, why should not protection be continued? Why should not that principle be made permanent, that had conduced to the country's good? He was told that the wages of the labourer was not dependent on the price of corn. His experience was contrary to that statement: in his own county (Leicestershire) a different result came under his own observation; and he was sure he could also appeal to the knowledge of the hon. Member for Lincoln, who would bear him out in the assertion that the agricultural labourer was, in a great measure, dependent on the price of the grain. The proposition was so self-evident, that his surprise was, how it could be disputed. Again, he was told that the design was to reconcile differences, and to remove any animosity which might exist between the various classes of Her Majesty's subjects. Whether he were to understand that the sentiment had allusion to the Anti-Corn-Law League he would not say; but that the agitation which was kept up in different parts of the country by the League, had its influence somewhere, there could not be the shadow of a doubt: at all events it brought the hon. Member for Stockport under the notice of that borough, and he was elected as its representative. As to the proposed measure of something in the shape of compensation, he had not the slightest hesitation in saying, that instead of advancing the agricultural interest it would rather impede it. The Loan Commissioners were to be allowed to lend the public money for draining. He did not consider that was a matter of any consequence, as it was easy enough for any gentleman to raise money upon his property, if he were so inclined. The whole of the propositions of the right hon. Baronet for the alleged benefit of the landholders, would not, if carried into effect, give them relief to the amount of 3*d.* in the pound. He wished to allude, before he sat down, to a circumstance that had been mentioned in the public prints of the day in reference to the election for Nottinghamshire, where it was stated that the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland had avowed that it was the intention of the Government to adopt a liberal policy towards Ireland; and he wished to observe that if it were likely that the noble Lord (Lincoln) was about to adopt such measures as would prove satisfactory to the noble Lord the Member for London, he would recommend the Irish Members of that House to look sharp about them as to what the policy in embryo was to be in regard to that country which they represented. The hon. Member concluded by thanking the House for the attention with which they had listened to the observations he considered it his duty to make upon the question under discussion.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said: In addressing to the House the few observations which I think it necessary to make upon this occasion, I find that I must begin, as most of the hon. Members have begun who have latterly taken a part in the discussion of the present question, by saying, that at this period of so protracted a debate I cannot expect to add anything to the facts and reasonings which have been already laid before the House. I shall therefore feel it my duty not to claim much of your attention; I shall endeavour to confine the observations which it will be necessary for me to make within as narrow limits as it is possible for me to assign them. As to the more prominent merits of the question, it appears to me quite unnecessary that I should say much after the great ability with which it has been opened by my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, and after the manner in which it was yesterday evening argued by my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Board of Trade, who, in the course of his speech, left no part of the subject untouched, nor any argument of his opponents unrefuted. My right hon. Friend established beyond the possibility of contradiction, that the progress which we had made, and were making, towards the removal of restrictions upon commerce must be regarded as successful—that all the relaxations which we had adopted had in every instance been attended with benefits, and produced results favourable to the comfort and hap-

piness of the community. But before I enter into the question itself, I should be glad to respond to a call which has been made upon me to give some personal explanations, and to state distinctly the part which I have taken in the transactions which have led to placing the Government in the situation in which we now stand. It has been supposed that upon this question I differ from my Colleagues in office; and it has been openly communicated through the ordinary channels of public information that I do so differ; but this, I think, will be proved to be as illusory as the arguments which have been urged against the measure itself. The course which I took I shall beg permission to state to the House as briefly as possible. In the middle of October last an opinion began to prevail in the public mind that a disease affecting the potato crop, had unfortunately extended itself throughout many parts of the country. On the 1st of November, the responsible advisers of the Crown were assembled for the purpose of considering the circumstances of the country. The House has been already informed by my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government that he then proposed to us two separate measures, either to open the ports by an Order in Council, or to call Parliament together for the purpose of immediately effecting that object by means of a legislative enactment. Upon both those propositions I differed from my right hon. Friend. I felt then, as I do now, exceedingly averse from any direct interference of the Government with the existing law. It appears to me that in all cases an interference of the Crown to suspend the operation of law must be hazardous and dangerous, unless there be an immediate, evident, and urgent necessity. Conceiving, then, that the state of Ireland did not come within this description—conceiving at that time that the case was not one which demanded an immediate course of action, and that there was no actual urgency, I certainly thought that it was not expedient by an Order in Council to open the ports for the admission of foreign corn. In forming that opinion, there was one point which I could not put out of consideration, namely, that we were not called upon to decide merely what should be the course taken at the moment respecting the Corn Laws. I could not conceal from myself the fact that the step which we were called upon to take, was one which must lead to a revision of the Corn Laws. I know it has been stated that a suspension of the law does not necessarily lead to the consequence to which I have referred. In earlier periods of the history of the Corn Laws the ports have been opened by an Order in Council without those injurious effects upon trade which had been anticipated; or without a change of the general law, at the time to which I am now referring. But the circumstances of those times were different: the sliding-scale of corn duties had not been established. It was the recommendation of that scale, that it readily adapted itself to the necessities of the country; that in a period of plenty it restricted the influx of foreign corn, and in a time of scarcity furnished facility for importation without interference on the part of the Government—an interference which had been on former occasions found most inconvenient. I felt that the sliding-scale, if good for anything, superseded the necessity of departing from principles, or of dispensing with the existing law for the purpose of letting in foreign grain. I considered suspension as neither more nor less than as an abrogation of the Corn Laws; and that circumstance was with me an additional argument for not effecting the object in view by means of an Order in Council. I considered that it would not be giving the corn question fair play to prejudge, by premature suspension, the continuance of the existing law, Such a step was calculated to excite the feelings and passions of the great body of the community previous to the moment when Parliament would be called to decide for or against those laws, and thus to prejudice a fair discussion. For these reasons, therefore, I gave my opinion against the admission of foreign corn into the country through the medium of an Order in Council. But my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government proposed an alternative; the immediate assembling of Parliament for the purpose of effecting the object of opening the ports by a legal enactment. To that proposition I equally offered an objection; but my objection rested on a different ground. The proposition was submitted on the 1st of November. At that period, no doubt, the Members of the Cabinet had, from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, accounts of widely-spread apprehensions as to an extensive failure in the potato crop of Ireland. On the other hand, however, there were opinions of others resting on what was considered respectable authority, that

the failure of the crop had not reached that extent which was calculated to give any colour of truth to the alarm which appeared to be entertained. At that period, moreover, the potato crop in Ireland had not been generally dug, and there was therefore no means of ascertaining by actual experiment, whether the apprehensions by which the public mind was disquieted were likely to lead to the extensive results which some persons were inclined to believe would be realized. I felt that with this defective information as to the extent of the calamity which appeared to be coming upon Ireland, it was highly probable that there might be so prevalent a doubt on the minds of a very large class, both in and out of this House, with respect to the actual extent of the disaster, as to render exceedingly unlikely that general concurrence to the proposed measure of acting on the Corn Laws by the means of a legislative enactment which was so essentially necessary to the securing successful results. I deemed it highly desirable that time should be afforded for further investigation, with a view to ascertain whether there were sufficient grounds for the apprehensions by which the country was beginning to be so seriously alarmed. I was anxious that it should be distinctly ascertained whether it were likely that these apprehensions would be realized; for I felt that in the event of our being able to show that the extent of the misfortune which impended over Ireland was anything like what we have now ascertained it to be, by authority which I regret to say, admits not of a shadow of doubt—I say I felt that, in the event of our being able to lay that as the true state of affairs before the public, there could be little doubt of our securing a more general concurrence in support of some measure for the immediate suspension and subsequent alteration of the Corn Laws, than we could hope to command if we proceeded at once to the discussion, provided only with information which, though unquestionably of an alarming character, was, notwithstanding, in many respects, defective and incomplete. For these reasons I gave my voice against the immediate assembling of Parliament. I may have been wrong, I may have committed an error of judgment, but I have no hesitation in asserting that I acted throughout in conformity with what I believed to be the best. It appeared to me that the danger with which we had to deal was one which could not be experienced at all events until an early period of the spring; and I confess I felt great anxiety that as large a number of hon. Gentlemen as possible should be induced by the power of undisputed evidence to concur in acknowledging the necessity which existed; it being in my view most desirable that the measures to be adopted should be sanctioned by a very large proportion of the Members of this House, and supported unequivocally by public opinion out of doors. I, therefore, preferred delay in the commencement of our operations, in order that, when they were commenced, they might be carried with a weight and an authority which would put an end to cavil and opposition. I may be told that, in opposing the Order in Council, I displayed a want of that boldness which a Minister ought to exhibit in dealing with great public emergencies. I may be told that I was wanting in that sagacity which ought to have enabled me to comprehend the actual extent of the calamity long before it had approached. I may be told, also, that I was yet more deficient in a knowledge of the feelings and opinions of those Friends who sit at the same side of the House with me; for that I should have known that they would at once have consented to the suspension of the Corn Laws if the question had been only put to them. I may, I say, have been in error in all these respects; but the error, if it be an error, was only one of judgment. To my own conscience I stand acquitted of any higher offence; and I hesitate not to assert, that after the lapse of the period which has since intervened, and after calmly reflecting on the course I have taken, and the advice I have given, I cannot, on review of the whole transaction, bring myself to believe, that if the case were again to be presented to me in the shape in which it then stood, I should be justified in pursuing a different course from that which I then adopted. After these differences in the Government, it was agreed to postpone the further consideration of the subject for a limited period, in order that more extensive information might be obtained. That further period did most unquestionably bring with it the strongest possible arguments for a change of opinion. Many days did not elapse before we were in possession of the Report of the Commissioners who had been sent to Ireland, detailing their views of the extent of the potato disease, and the limited amount of the crop on which it was possible to calculate with reference to next year. The

statement contained in the Report of these Commissioners was confirmed by actual experience when the crop came to be dug up; and it was then put beyond all question that to such an extent had the potato plague spread, that in some districts of the country one-half of the crop was lost, in others one-third, in others three-fourths. Nor was this the full extent of the calamity; for there was a general feeling, and one which I believe was completely warranted by the fact, that in some portions of Ireland the preservation of any part of the crop, however minute, depended altogether upon the wetness or fairness of the weather afterwards. When these facts were known, the case was relieved from its difficulties; and, although I was well aware, and felt most deeply that the adoption by us of the course which my right hon. Friend has now proposed to you, would be attended by the dissolution of party connexions, and that it would cause my separation from many of those with whom for many years it has been my pride to act, and whom, I trust, I may still be permitted to call my hon. Friends—I say, although I felt that this must be the inevitable consequence of the measure, I also felt that there were imposed upon me, by my position as Minister, other and higher duties paramount to the feelings of party attachment; and being convinced that the alteration of the Corn Laws had now become a question of absolute necessity, I was of opinion that under all the circumstances of the case those laws ought to undergo a change. At the same time, however, I felt that the change ought to be effected by others than myself and my right hon. Friends with whom I was associated in office; and entertaining that opinion, I cordially concurred in the resignation of our charge into the hands of persons who, from their longer maintenance of the opinions which we then entertained, were better fitted to discharge the duty, and had perhaps a better chance of carrying the contemplated measure into operation. And here permit me to assure the House, with the most unaffected sincerity, that when I tendered to Her Majesty my resignation of office, I had not the remotest conception that I should have ever to deal with this question in any other capacity than as a private Member of Parliament. If any hon. Gentleman should be inclined to question this assertion, I am prepared to sustain it by testimony which cannot be resisted. I am prepared to prove, by evidence of the most incontestable character, that when I resigned my office, the resumption of it at a subsequent period never entered into my contemplation. But when it was discovered that the noble Lord the Member for London found it impossible to construct a Cabinet with satisfaction to himself, the question arose whether I should decline to accept office in a Government of which my right hon. Friend was again to be the head. Sir, I know of no principle on which it would be possible to justify a refusal. I had in the first instance doubted as to the exact time at which the great move should be taken, and as to the particular measure which ought to be proposed; but I had subsequently seen sufficient to convince me of the necessity of an alteration in the Corn Laws, and I was perfectly prepared, as a private Member, to give the sanction of my vote to that course of policy which, under all the circumstances of the case, I considered most conducive to the interests of the country. Therefore, being fully prepared to maintain in my private capacity the opinions which I now advocate as a Minister, I felt that there was nothing against honour, or duty, in my resumption of the situation which I at present occupy. That is, in a few words, a brief history of the transaction as far as I am concernod. I trust this explanation will satisfy my Friend the hon. and gallant Member for Liverpool; and that he will understand that, although I may have had doubts at first as to the particular period at which, and the particular mode in which, Her Majesty's Ministers ought to have introduced the measures which they considered necessary, I have come at length to the deliberate conclusion that I am best consulting the interests of the country by adopting the course which I am now pursuing. A noble Lord, a friend of mine, who has spoken in the course of this debate, charges me with acting in a manner inconsistent with my duty in not tendering a resignation of my seat in Parliament to my constituents; and he calls on me to make some explanation of the fact that I still remain here as Representative of the University of Cambridge. Now, Sir, I think it right to state that the views I take of the duties of a representative differ very materially from those which have been expressed by the noble Lord. I do not pretend to say that if hon. Gentlemen, at the period of their election, think fit to pledge themselves, under all conceivable circumstances, to maintain parti-

cular laws, and to take particular views of certain specified questions, they may not take upon themselves an obligation which they are bound in all honour to redeem, and which renders it imperative on them to resign their seats if they see grounds for departing from those pledges; but I am not one of those who are in this position. In offering myself as a representative to my constituency, I gave no pledge as to the Corn Law; I was asked for none. I may have stated to them in general terms my views on particular questions, if they happened to come under discussion; but I have ever reserved to myself, in the most unequivocal manner, the fullest right to adopt, in reference to every question that may be deliberated upon in this House, that course — whatever it may be—which in my conscience I believe to be most conducive to the general interests of the community; and however strongly an opposite course may be sanctioned by some great examples, however conformable it may be to the views of certain hon. Gentlemen who have pledged themselves at the hustings—I cannot admit that it is the duty of a representative who happens to act in opposition to the feelings of some portion of his constituents on a particular question, to make that difference the ground for tendering his resignation, or even for acquiescing in a demand that he should do so. I gave no pledges whatsoever with respect to the Corn Laws on any of the occasions on which I addressed myself to my constituents. I never expressed that permanent and unqualified adherence to existing laws which some hon. Members around me appear to have expressed when they were elected; and upon these grounds I think that I should be abdicating the character of a representative altogether—that I should be depriving myself of the capacity of being useful to any class in the community if I were, by my professions or my example, to give countenance to the idea that it is the duty of a representative, when he differs from his constituents on any point, to give back into their hands the trust that has been reposed in him. Thus much, Sir, I have said on matters personal to myself. I have to apologize to the House for having trespassed at such length on their time and attention by matters having reference to myself; but I felt that I was called on to say something in explanation, and having done so I now proceed to address myself to the consideration of the question more immediately before us. That question is one which in my opinion can be comprised within a very narrow compass. It is simply whether you will continue to progress in the course which for some years past you have pursued in the relaxation of protective duties, or whether you will be content, not merely to remain stationary where you are, but to retrograde on the path which, after full and mature consideration, you have entered. I am well aware, that in the course of this debate many hon. Members who have supported the Government up to this period in their relaxing policy, maintain that we have now arrived at that particular point in the withdrawal of protection from native industry at which it is essential that we should stop. They contend that we ought not to advance beyond it, because we cannot do so without injuring interests which we ought to protect, and because they think that in remaining where we are, we are doing what they believe to be just to all parties. But when I consider the arguments of some of my Friends at this side of the House —when I hear one hon. Member declare that as regards the Corn Laws he thinks they ought to be suspended at once, and when I find that that sentiment is cheered in such a manner as would seem to show that it met with very considerable approval — when I hear other Gentlemen admitting that the Corn Laws may be modified after a certain fashion — when I see that some hon. Members advance a step further, and some not quite so far, on this question—when, I say, I see and hear all this, it appears to me that the great principle for which we are contending is conceded upon all hands; and I certainly think that those Gentlemen will find it difficult to account for the reasons why, with such professions and admissions on their lips, they resist, as they are resisting, the Motion now before the House. I could have understood them if they had proposed some modification of the Corn Laws, or if they were prepared with some amendment after getting into Committee. That would have been a natural and rational course. That would have been the proper time and mode to consider the measure. But they have adopted the course which precludes all consideration whatsoever of that kind. Whatever they may be in words, in actions they are against us. They refuse as much to suspend as to abrogate the Corn Laws. They have taken a step from which no other results can come, but to remain just

as we are, without remedy for the existing evil, which they admit to be great—without a remedy for a possible future evil which may be yet more dreadful—and without the means of making that progress in the coure we have undertaken which is essential for the welfare of this country. Sir, in support of the views which the Government take in support of this question, we have appealed, and I think in the opinion of the country successfully appealed, to the results of experience, as attesting the progress which the country has made in opulence and power since the protective system has been relaxed. That progress has been attempted to be denied by certain hon. Members who are adverse to free trade. They have referred to figures and calculations in support of their position, that no beneficial consequences have resulted from the relaxation of the protective system; but I think I am warranted in saying, that these figures and calculations have proved an utter failure. ["No, no."] Well, I think they have. I think they have been most triumphantly overthrown by my Friend the Vice President of the Board of Trade. The statement made by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government was this, that it could not be shown that in the case of any one of all the articles affected by the recent reductions of the protective system, anything had resulted from the relaxation but increased activity to the trade and improvement to the industry of the country. This was the proposition that was advanced; and how was it refuted? After some delay, one hon. Gentleman, the Member for Birmingham, pointed to the article of spelter or zinc; but the Vice President of the Board of Trade met the assertions of the Member for Birmingham, and settled spelter as everything else had been settled; for he showed that though the home producer of the article might have had some diminution of profit, the relaxation of the protective duty led to the introduction of a foreign raw material, the manufacture of which opened a new source of industry, and afforded increased employment to a vast number of the poorer classes in this country. An hon. Friend of mine (Mr. Liddell) yesterday evening thought it necessary to complain of the hardship which those free-trade measures would inflict upon the shipping interests. He told us that whatever might be its effect upon other interests, the welfare of the shipping interests was inseparably identified with the preservation of the protective system; and he did not seem willing to admit that the shipowners had derived any benefit whatever from the relaxations that had already taken place, or were likely to realize any from the reductions now in contemplation. I must say, Sir, as my hon. Friend at the head of the Government has already said, that this opposition to freedom of commercial intercourse on the part of the shipping interests, is one which greatly excites my surprise. I should have thought that a system of commercial intercourse which leads to a great increase of exports and imports, would have suggested itself to the mind of every thinking man as one calculated to increase the shipping by means of which these imports and exports were carried; and that it would be as clear as light, that in proportion as commercial intercourse extends, in the same proportion would your shipping interest be benefited; and that this additional benefit would also be realized—that by abundant commerce in the times of peace, we should provide ample means of defensive or offensive hostility in the event of war. This I ever regarded as the natural result of free commercial intercourse, as far as the shipping interests were concerned; and I confess that no one could be more surprised than I at finding opposition on the part of the shipping interests to the propositions of the Government. But I deny that the shipping interests have been injuriously affected by the relaxation of protective duties. I can prove the contrary to be the fact. In the year 1842 the tonnage of British vessels entering inwards amounted to 2,600,000 tons. In the year 1845 it was 3,669,000 tons, showing an increase consequent on the relaxation of protection duties of one million of tons in that period. [An hon. MEMBER: The Chinese trade.] Making every allowance for the increase of the Chinese trade, and every other circumstance, with every deduction, there will be found to be a large increase in the tonnage. Now my hon. Friend the Member for the county of Durham insists that injurious effects are likely to result to the timber trade from the proposed measures; and that injury has resulted from the relaxations which have already taken place. But let us come to figures. Let us consider what has been the quantity of shipping engaged in the Baltic trade within the last few years. In the year 1842 the number of ships engaged in that trade was 3,519; their tonnage was six hundred and thirteen

thousand eight hundred and nine ; in the year 1844 the number was 4,424, and their tonnage eight hundred and eighteen thousand four hundred and forty tons ; showing an increase of nearly 1,000 ships, and 200,000 tons. My hon. Friend has said that the increase of British shipping in the Baltic bears no proportion to the foreign ships that are engaged in the same trade, and, therefore, that the removal of the duty would throw into the hands of foreigners a greater extent of trade than we derived ourselves from the same source. I admit that it is the necessary consequence of the navigation law itself, that the foreigner can introduce, if he pleases, the produce of his country in the shipping of his own nation. But there is another reason for the increase of foreign shipping in the Baltic trade, which the measure before the House is calculated to remove ; and if my hon. Friend deems it expedient to give encouragement to British shipping in the Baltic, there is no means by which he can do it more effectually than by passing the measure now before the House. Sir, if the hon. Gentleman had looked to the proportion of shipping employed in the conveyance of corn under the system of the Corn Laws—when, the demand being sudden, it must come immediately from the country where the produce is, in the ships that are to be had on the spot, and cannot wait to be introduced in ships which come from this country, carrying out a cargo to bring back a cargo in return—if he looked to the disproportion in that particular branch of trade between the British and foreign shipping employed, he would see that he could not give a better chance of employment to British shipowners, than by passing the measure now before the House. It appears by the returns of corn-laden ships that pass through the Sound, that there are 1,138 foreign ships, and only 501 British—a disproportion exceeding that which prevails in the ordinary course of trade, and only to be accounted for by the circumstance I have stated. Then, if my hon. Friend wishes to restore the employment of British shipping, let him join with us in doing that which, by giving more freedom in commercial intercourse with those particular ports, and in an article which will not be suddenly sent for, but in a regular article of trade—let him join us in passing that measure, and his object will be accomplished. But then, said my hon. Friend, this diminution of duty on Baltic timber will necessarily affect the shipping interests as regards your Canadian provinces, and tend to injure those provinces which you ought to protect. I will tell my hon. Friend, that in making that statement he falls into an error which is not uncommon with those who argue in favour of protection in respect to commercial measures. They think that an advantage on one side is sure to produce a disadvantage on the other; whereas the converse of the proposition is more near the fact ; for by increasing the import of an article into a country, instead of inflicting an injury upon the home produce, you confer a benefit on it. I have already referred to the state of our trade in the Baltic, in 1842 and 1844; and now let us see what is the state of the shipping trade in those years in the British North American Colonies. In 1842, 1,550 ships were cleared out: in 1844, 2,844 ships were cleared out, with a tonnage, in the former case, of 540,000, and in the latter of 789,000. Can there be any more conclusive evidence than this affords, that the reduction of the duty on foreign commodities does not injuriously affect the colonial trade, or the interests of the British shipowners connected with it? But this does not rest on my statement. There was a Committee last year in which this very question incidentally arose ; and Mr. Chapman, a gentleman of great knowledge and of extensive interest in the trade of shipping, then stated the benefits which the shipping interest had derived from the operation of the Tariff, of which the success was doubted at the time it passed. He was asked—

"Is it not the fact, that it is only since freights were not remunerative that the attention of shipowners has been directed to obtaining relief from any quarter they could?"

And he said—

"The fact is, that until Sir Robert Peel, by the new Tariff, allowed us to get foreign provisions out of bond, the competition we had to maintain against foreigners was most unfair : that made a difference of 30 per cent. upon those provisions at once. Previously it was like a penalty hanging over us, and a premium to the foreigner."

And yet, if there were one point upon which more anxiety was expressed in particular quarters than another, it was the admission of provisions which would be brought into competition with your produce ; but the exclusion of which had, as it appeared, been in fact, so unfavourable to British trade as to give to the foreigner a premium of 30 per cent. Mr. Chapman was then asked—

"Has that relaxation of the law, by which vessels

going abroad can provision out of bond, been very useful to the shipping ?—Of the greatest possible consequence ; it makes just the difference, I believe, between a loss or no loss upon sailing the ship, as they are obliged to do, because they are compelled to have apprentices, and the apprentices must be maintained ; and the real fact is, that they often send ships to sea only to save themselves being out of pocket."

His evidence was further continued, and he was asked—

" Are we to understand from what you have stated, and from the trade in guano, the shipping have not suffered so much as they did the three preceding years ?"

His answer was—

" Yes, because the freights are becoming better all over the world. There is one exception, I believe. In the Canada trade they got from 30*s.* to 38*s.* and 40*s.* ; that has been the rise since last year."

And he says—

" If you will give me 38*s.* a load for yellow pine for ten years to come, I will contract to supply you with any amount of tonnage."

When therefore my hon Friend speaks of those affected by the late change, and as likely to be affected by the future change, he proceeds only upon the statement of individuals who, embarking in the shipping trade when it was more costly than at present, find it difficult to derive that return from their capital which they have a right to expect ; I admit that there were shipowners at the time of the reduction of duty upon Baltic timber upon whom it necessarily had an injurious effect. Ships built before the reduction, were built at an enormously enhanced expense, in consequence of the duty on timber, necessarily imposed upon them ; and though my hon. Friend said that that statement was erroneous, and that the Baltic timber was not required for the making of ships, my hon. Friend must recollect that the duty on Baltic timber enhanced in precisely the same proportion the value and price of British oak with which ships were built, and did indirectly add to the price of building ships nearly or exactly to the same extent as if built from timber brought from the Baltic. I think, therefore, it is probable that gentlemen who have built ships of those expensive materials find it difficult to compete with those who have built ships since then of cheaper materials. But, if I may compare great things with small, they stand precisely in the situation of those innkeepers on the north road, who are ruined because the turnpike roads no longer bring customers to their houses, the railways affording a better mode of conveyance. But, says another hon. Friend, " Why, what an injury you are about to commit on Canada, whom you patronized two Sessions ago, and to whom you gave the advantage of being considered on the same footing as the mother country!" But has Canada any right to complain that you are now going to admit foreign corn in competition with the corn of Canada. I will stand up as high as any man for the purpose of preserving our colonial connexion, and of doing for the Colonies everything that is just, equitable, and right, and likely to conduce to their ultimate benefit ; but if in dealing with the Colonies you place their produce on the same footing as the produce of your own country, they have no right to complain, if, for the general benefit, you place in competition with them the same foreign commodities which you place in competition with those of your own country ; and therefore, if they complain that their advantages are diminished, my answer is, " You stand on the same footing as the mother country ; you share her advantages, and you must also share the inconveniences, if they exist, with her; but you have no right to complain." Now, it has been a favourite argument with hon. Gentlemen, in discussing this question, and it is always a favourite mode of dealing with a subject when arguments cannot be readily adduced against it, to draw a picture of the extravagant consequences likely to result from it. We have been told, therefore, that if free trade be permitted to one article, it must be the same to all ; that there should be no duty on tea, tobacco, or other articles, because they say that that interferes with the course of free trade. But I beg to state that, in adopting those principles which are promulgated by the Government, I do not adopt extreme opinions either on the one side or the other. I admit that all duties, whether they be raised for taxation or otherwise, are impediments to trade, and I admit that, in many instances, they may indirectly operate as protection ; for it is impossible, under any financial system, however carefully regulated, to avoid the effect of a revenue duty in some instances being a duty of protection ; and therefore, when I advocate free trade, I put in my claim decidedly to retain those duties which are essential for revenue purposes; to retain those restrictive duties which are essential for preserving public morals; and to retain those duties which may be necessary occasionally for the public safety. And in doing so, I do not conceive that I am in the least de-

gree departing from the legitimate application of the principles of free trade to a society constituted as ours is; I view freedom of trade in the same light as I view civil liberty. The liberty of the subject must necessarily be under some restraint if he continues to live in a state of society; but you are not to take any restrictions which may be imposed upon that liberty as the law by which your conduct is to be regulated. It is an exception from the general rule, which it may be desirable to adopt, and you may find it indispensably necessary to maintain it upon one of the grounds I have stated—either for revenue or national safety, or, what is more important than all, for the purpose of national morality. The greater part of the argument on the present question has turned upon the probable effect the repeal of the Corn Laws is likely to have upon the agricultural interest. Hon. Gentlemen have supposed that by introducing competition with the agriculture of this country, we are likely to be overwhelmed with foreign produce, and that the agriculturist is likely to lose his fair reward. We have heard various points argued in the course of this debate; but I will content myself merely with calling the attention of the House to two cases in which we have made a fair trial of what is the effect of restriction upon agriculture, and what is the effect of introducing competition with respect to it; and from the results of these two experiments which history furnishes, I think I can show in the strongest manner the advantages which competition produces to the country which fully admits it. It is, perhaps, known to the House, that a considerable number of years since, as long ago as the reign of Charles II., the agricultural interest of this country entertained very similar opinions to those which have been professed by individuals connected with that interest at the present moment, and thought they were deeply affected by the importation of produce which came into competition with their own. At that time the object of alarm was Ireland. It was thought that Ireland, where labour was cheap, the soil fertile, the climate favourable, and where there was every inducement to exertion, might by competition overwhelm the industry of this country, and lead to the ruin of the agriculturist here; and the Parliament of that day thought fit to pass a law for preventing the importation of cattle from Ireland. Now, it was curious to observe what arguments were used at that period when this disposition prevailed to give to this country the entire monopoly of cattle. History tells us, as to the proceedings in the House of Commons—

"There was a great rumour, rather than a complaint, of the great damage the kingdom sustained from the importation of Irish cattle, which were bred there for nothing, and transported for little, and might well undersell all the cattle here; and hence the breed of cattle would be totally given over, and thereby the land yield no rent proportionably to what it ever had done, and that this could only be remedied by a very strict Act of Parliament to forbid the importation."

However, there were some Members of the agricultural interest who did not concur in those views, for Lord Clarendon tells us—

"Very many Members of several counties desired that their counties might not undergo any damage for the benefit of other individual places. They professed that their counties had no land bad enough to breed, and that their great traffic consisted in buying the cattle, making them fat, and upon this they paid their rent; and this appeared to be the case of many counties in England."

But the voices of those Gentlemen had little weight in the House of Commons. The Bill was carried with almost universal assent, and taken up to the House of Lords, and the House shall hear the reception it met with in the Upper House:—

"In the Lords, a marvellous keen resolution appeared to use all expedition in passing it, and I must remark upon the singular coincidence, that the Duke of Buckingham appeared at the head of those who favoured the Bill with a marvellous concernment; and at the time appointed for the debate of it, contrary to his custom of coming to the House, indeed of not rising till eleven o'clock, and seldom staying above a quarter of an hour, except upon some business he concerned himself in, he was always present from the first thing in the morning, and stayed till the last at night, for the debate often held from the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, and sometimes till candles were brought it. It was urged that, if the Bill did not pass, all the rents in Ireland would rise in a vast proportion, and those in England fall as much."

In consequence of this statement two noble Lords, one an English proprietor and the other an Irish, fought a duel by way of settling the question. And seven years afterwards a distinguished man in this country—an ancestor of the noble Lord whom I see opposite (Sir W. Temple)—in writing a letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1673, when this law, which had been pressed forward so anxiously, had been in operation seven years, said—

"When the passage is open, land will be turned most to feed cattle; when shut, to sheep, as it is at present; though I am of opinion it cannot last, because this Act seems to have been carried on rather by the interest of particular counties in

England than by that of the whole, which, in my opinion, must evidently be a loser by it. For first, the freight of all cattle that are brought over, being in English vessels, was so much clear gain to England. The trade of hides and tallow, or else of leather, was mightily advanced in England. Where the Irish sell, there will they be sure to buy too; and all the foreign merchandize which they had before from Bristol, Chester, and London, they will have in time from Rouen, Amsterdam, Lisbon, and the Straits. As for the cause of the decay of rents in England, which was made the occasion of that Act, that proceeded not from the importation of Irish cattle. Besides, the rents have been far from increasing since."

The Bill, therefore, which was, by excluding the importation of cattle from Ireland, to have kept up the rents of England, is proved, after seven years' experience, by one most capable to judge—by a man of the most admirable judgment and most conversant with the affairs of England and Ireland, to have failed in its object, and to have caused rather a diminution than increase of rents. But there is a period in later times which shows, on the contrary, that the admission of competition contributes to the prosperity of agriculture. It is perfectly well known, that, up to the period of the Union, Ireland was, as to the importation of corn into this country, treated as a foreign country. In 1800 and 1801, there were 3,000 quarters of Irish corn imported in the one year, and 2,500 in the other; but after the Union, and after a free trade of corn was established between Ireland and this country, the corn of Ireland was at once admitted to the markets of this country, in competition with corn grown by the agriculturists here; and we must bear in mind that at that particular period the population of England amounted to something short of 11,000,000 souls, and the quantity of corn raised in England was proportionate to the population which at that time existed in it. Ireland rapidly sent large and annually increasing quantities of corn for consumption of the people here, and in the course of a few years she imported at first 460,000 quarters per annum; and ultimately the corn sent annually to England from Ireland amounted to between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 quarters. Why, if there were any force in the arguments that agriculture would be ruined by the importation of corn from countries where labour is cheap, the land fertile, and where there is great room for improvement—why had they not weight, as applied to the admission into England, of corn from Ireland, which enjoyed all those peculiar advantages? And if England, with a population of 11,000,000, could sustain the admission to that extent of corn from Ireland, not only without injury, but, as I will show you, to the great improvement of its own agriculture; what fear have we now, when the population of the United Kingdom amounts to 27,000,000, that any practicable importation from abroad can exceed, in proportion to the population, the quantity that we previously admitted from Ireland, or can produce an effect upon the agriculture of this country more prejudicial, or, I ought to say, less beneficial, than that which the Irish importation has produced? It is from the time of the Union that we may date our improvements in agriculture, and the stimulus that has been given to British industry. In the ten years subsequent to the admission of Irish corn, a greater number of Enclosure Bills were introduced into this House than at any previous or subsequent period. The gentlemen of England immediately paid great attention to the extension of agriculture, and to the application of science to its improvement. We find that the price of corn in England was not reduced by the importations that took place from Ireland; but that agricultural prosperity was growing from year to year. If, therefore, as I said before, upon the limited field into which these large importations of Irish corn were introduced, you find no sensible effect to the injury of the agriculture of this country—that competition led to industry and permanent improvement—how can you argue that a small introduction of corn from the Continent more limited in amount in proportion to the present population, will produce those disastrous effects which the hon. Gentlemen on my right are so fond of predicting? Another circumstance with respect to the agriculture of the two countries strikes me as of importance. I think no man present, whatever his attachment to the sister country may be, will deny that the agriculture of that country, as compared with the agriculture of this, is deficient in the extreme. Yet, to which country has competition been most stringently applied? England has received corn from Ireland—a country where the soil is fertile, wages low, and taxation trifling. Ireland has imported no corn, because her ports have been sealed against importation; and the consequence is, that from the want of competition, agriculture in Ireland has remained in much the same state that it was in when permission was obtained for the introduction of its corn into the English market;

while competition, thus denied to Ireland, has been beneficial to England. My hon. Friend dreads the competition of any foreign country with Ireland. I think that what I have said will satisfy him, that, by the application of the same principles to the sister country the same effects might be expected; and that, so far from reducing the value of land and the amount of employment for the poor, a stimulus will be created there by the increased demand which an extended intercourse with foreign countries will necessarily give. It will produce there, as in England, greater employment in agriculture, and the establishment of manufactories to meet the wants of the people. It has been said, and said truly, by my hon. Friend, that the home market is the most valuable market. But the very object and effect of the proposed change is to enhance prices in that market; and, so far from the agriculturist being influenced by jealousy, he is in my view of the question of all men the individual who should most rejoice in that extension of commercial intercourse which, adding to the wealth of the general body of the community, gives him the richest customer for the produce he has to sell. I will refer to one other topic which has formed a larger proportion of this debate than any other; I mean those different arguments with respect to the inconsistency of public men. They have formed the main staple of the arguments of hon. Gentlemen; and whenever the word has been used, it has never failed to elicit their cheers. I am as strong an advocate for consistency as any man. But, Sir, shall I be told that consistency consists in adhering to a particular line upon a subject which is subject to variation with the altered state of society from time to time? Am I to be told that if I in one particular year adopt a measure and give my assent to it, because at the time I believe it to be a proper one, I then am not at any subsequent period, whatever alteration may take place in the circumstances of the country, in the wants of the population, in the deficiency of their means of being fed, at liberty to depart from the line which I have already supported? I say that, in maintaining such opinions, you place consistency on a ground which is not tenable, and, so far from supporting the consistency of public men, you do more, by placing it on a wrong basis, to damage it than otherwise. Who is there among hon. Gentlemen who has been, in their sense, consistent upon the Corn Law? I know of no public man for many years past, not excepting Mr. Huskisson, Lord Brougham, and Lord Liverpool, who has not entertained different opinions at different times. And now let me ask, are the hon. Gentlemen on my right themselves agreed upon the question? Are they prepared to maintain the principle that constancy and adherence to a particular line are to be the rule by which the virtue of public men is to be tested? Why, even the hon. Member for Northamptonshire says, "I never imagined that these laws would be permanent." He admits that the time may come when they may be changed. I would ask my hon. Friend, when is the time at which he thinks it will not be inconsistent to change? When are these Corn Laws to be altered or abrogated, as he thinks they must be? When a Gentleman tells me that he does not imagine certain duties are to be permanent, it is clear that he does contemplate a change at some time or other. I ask him, then, to show me the pèriod when he will be prepared to advocate the repeal of the duty on corn? Will he tell me the time when that repeal can be effected with less injury to society at large, or with greater advantage to the general body of the community? Or will he show the time when resistance to the repeal of the Corn Law can be less effectively maintained, or lead to less dangerous consequences? The question at issue between us is merely a question of time. I think the present the most important period for us to lay hold of for the purpose. We have reached a period when there is great distress from the failure of a particular crop; we are arrived at a moment when not only do we contemplate the effects of the failure of the present potato crop, but we look forward to the consequences of a failure in future years, probably leading to the substitution of a diet of corn instead of potatoes. For although the noble Lord the Member for Staffordshire has very kindly advertised the potatoes grown by Mr. Chapman in his garden at Isleworth, from diseased Irish potatoes, I must say that more extensive experiments have been made by gardeners, scientific men, and others, and the results have been anything but satisfactory. I have seen, Sir, accounts from America, where this disease has prevailed for three consecutive years. It was observed in the first instance in a slight degree. In the second year it came with aggravated force. In this year in which we are now speaking the

destruction of the crop in North America is equal to that in many parts of Ireland. What has happened in other countries may also happen in this; and in the prospect of the continuance of this disease, is it not prudent and wise to take the earliest opportunity for providing increased provision for the wants of the people? It is not only that the disease prevails in England and in Ireland, but there is the apprehension of a subsequent prevalence of the disease in other countries; and if it should continue, there will be a demand for corn in those countries beyond that of the present moment, and during the same period that we shall have an increased demand also; and the probability will rather be that we shall not get that supply which we shall necessarily require under any circumstances, than that we shall have the inundation of corn which some hon. Gentlemen fear. Has the House ever considered the situation in which this country stands at this moment in regard to the extent to which its population is growing every day? Have they calculated that the addition to the population made every year requires no less than from 100,000 to 120,000 additional acres of wheat to be grown every year, to meet their wants? If we cannot add this extent of land (in size equal to a county) every year, must we not look abroad for aid; and do not circumstances loudly call upon us to make provision in time for the wants that are coming upon us? I ask hon. Gentlemen, will they wait until the time of distress, famine, and mortality arrives, before they make a settlement of this question? and will they then be able to settle it satisfactorily to their own minds, or in such a way as to produce a good effect upon the minds of those who require the change, in order to be supplied with food? For myself, I must say that this is the time at which the repeal of the Corn Laws ought to be effected, and the question settled; by doing it now we shall effectually provide for the happiness of the people, and excite a spirit of emulation and enterprise which must result in general good. It is not necessary for me to go into all the objections of the hon. Gentlemen who oppose this measure. I am surprised that so many of my hon. Friends should express themselves in terms of such strong disapprobation of the conduct of her Majesty's Government. I regret that some of those for whom I have the greatest respect should have expressed themselves hostile, not merely to the measure, but to the individuals by whom it is propounded. I do not presume or intend to retort upon any hon. Gentleman the expressions used and applied to us. But my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Dublin, in a speech which, he will permit me to state, contains far more of eloquent declamation and attack upon my right hon. Friend, than of argument upon the subject, stated that it was the duty of an independent Member of the House to maintain what he believed to be a right opinion, independent of the men by whom any measure may be brought forward. I allow, in the fullest terms, the propriety of the right hon. Gentleman retaining to himself that right. I only ask him to allow the Ministers of the Crown the same latitude of acting upon the principles they believe to be right, independently of those by whom their measures may be opposed. I ask him if he himself thinks that he is not liable to censure while acting upon principles which he believes to be right, that he will at least allow others to pursue the same course without bestowing upon them those opprobrious epithets he has applied to them? The right hon. Gentleman told us that we were unstable in mind. He says that we are infirm of purpose, and calls us political tergiversators. My right hon. Friend told us that we were "Cabinet jugglers," and made use of an observation which was not very kind, courteous, or just, and one which I regret the more, as it affects the character and reputation of my right hon. Friends, rather than that it is applicable to any part I have had in the the proceedings of the Government. The House has had laid before them distinctly the whole of the transactions of the Government in their resignation of office and their return to it; and I believe, with the exception of my right hon. Friend, there is not a man in the House who would believe there was any but the utmost openness and sincerity in those transactions. There was no deception—none of that political jugglery which the right hon. Gentlemen imputes to us. My only regret is, that the public at large, viewing the hasty, inconsiderate manner in which my right hon. Friend has given judgment on this occasion, may be misled into the belief that he wants that candour and calm consideration of evidence which I believe he is accustomed to display elsewhere, and which, certainly, is most becoming in one filling his high judicial office. I may be called a

coward or a political tergiversator. I admit that I was afraid to maintain party connexions in opposition to the public interest. I was afraid to risk the subsistence of a nation in deference to the opinions of a party. If that was cowardice, I am guilty of that cowardice, and I am not ashamed to avow it. I may be called a political tergiversator. But if I have turned my back upon my political friends, it has been only to protect them from the consequences of their want of foresight. Seeing that there was famine in Ireland ahead, and fearing the effect of the reaction upon the interests of this country, I was not ashamed to turn a bold front to the threatening dangers, though in doing so I may have turned my back on some of those with whom I was before associated. I tell my hon. Friends, that though I painfully feel the loss of their good opinion upon matters connected with politics, I shall ever remember with satisfaction the periods when we were formerly connected; and I trust that when their judgment shall have had time to cool —when they shall see the dangers with which this country is threatened, not merely in prospect, but in real operation—when they shall be aware of the necessity that existed of making provision for those dangers by the alteration of the laws affecting the supply of food—I know enough of them to believe that, however inconsistent it may appear to them now to change their opinions upon a public measure, there is not one of them who will not then admit that he was wrong in condemning this measure, which has been proposed by Her Majesty's Government with the full belief that it is calculated to promote the best interests of the country.

Mr. FERRAND: I believe, Sir, I am now perfectly in order in alluding to those petitions which were presented a few nights ago by the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Lord Morpeth). Hon. Gentlemen will remember, that, in the year 1843, I produced evidence before this House that the Anti-Corn-Law League had purchased signatures in the West Riding of Yorkshire at one shilling a hundred. I was well aware when the noble Lord presented those petitions, that, though he might believe that the signatures to them were genuine, and the unbiassed acts of the parties who had attached their names, such was not the fact; and I am here prepared to prove before a Committee of this House, if my statement is denied, that the working people are compelled by the master manufacturers who support the Anti-Corn-Law League to attach their signatures to these petitions, however strongly they may be opposed to them in principle. If those men dare refuse to attach their signatures to such petitions, they know perfectly well that they sacrifice their daily bread. I am indebted to the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) for having, several years ago, exposed in this House the odious intimidation and oppression which was practised upon the working men in the manufacturing districts if they dared to disobey their masters. He said in this House, that "it was a regulation entered into by the masters of Scotland that no person who quitted one factory should be employed in another; and that object was effected by the masters sending round to each other lists of the men who from any cause whatever had quitted their employment, so that no man who happened to differ with his master could succeed in obtaining employment elsewhere." Is not this "an odious combination?" That combination has been introduced into the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire; and I again repeat, that no working man who is employed by an Anti-Corn-Law League manufacturer dare refuse to attach his signature to any petition that may be presented to him. But I have seen several petitions for the repeal of the Corn Laws presented to this House by hon. Gentlemen opposite; and among others one by the noble Lord the Member for the city of London. I will ask those hon. Gentlemen, as well as the noble Lord, whether they conscientiously believe that the signatures to those petitions are genuine? I have never heard those petitions alluded to during this debate. If the hon. Gentlemen who presented them had believed the signatures to them were genuine, they would surely have pointed to them as an evidence of public opinion upon this question. Now, I tell the House that I am prepared to produce evidence at the bar of this House, or before a Committee of the House, that one man attached 14,000 signatures to one of these petitions without ever having left his house or asked a single person to write his name. That is the way in which the petitions of the Anti-Corn-Law League have been got up, and then placed upon the Table of this House. So much for your petitions. I may now be allowed to allude to the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward) the other evening. While the hon. Gentleman was

delivering that speech, I contradicted him in rather a round manner; but I assure him I intended nothing in the slightest degree offensive. But as the hon. Member mentioned several circumstances in a most positive, and, let me tell him, dictatorial manner, I thought I had a right to give a somewhat positive denial to his statements. That hon. Gentleman said it was a "notorious fact that some hon. Members of this House, with some foolishness, and much good nature, had subscribed 2,000*l.* to enable the hon. Member to fight the West Riding election." That fact may be notorious, but I never heard of it before; and if the hon. Gentleman will be so obliging as to inform me where I can find the money, I will cheerfully allow him 20 per cent. The hon. Gentleman then went on to say that I had published a very able letter. I begin to think this was the case, for I have seen no answer to it from any member of the Anti-Corn-Law League. The hon. Gentleman also said that I had completely succeeded in what he believed was my peculiar mission—in creating a hostile feeling between the masters and men, the employers and the workmen. Now, I totally deny that charge. The hon. Member says he read my speeches. Can he deny any statements I made? If he cannot, he will find that I merely exposed to the public gaze, and brought under his notice, cruelties and oppression which have been for years practised by the masters towards their workmen, and which have produced the bad feeling he charges me with exciting. He said that my friends actually repudiated my efforts. That assertion I most strongly deny. When I arrived in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Tory party—I don't mean the Conservative party, for, thank God, there is not now such a party in the country—told me that it was utterly useless to attempt to contest the election. They said—"The Anti-Corn-Law League have been here, and by fraud and perjury have swamped the honest and constitutional electors. They have placed 2,000 electors upon the register, and we don't think we have any chance." I advised them to fight the battle. I told them they had truth and honesty on their side, and that I believed the honest electors would rise up indignantly against this impudent attempt of a factious league to trample them under its feet. I have no hesitation in saying, that if Mr. Edwin Lascelles had fought the battle as he ought to have done, and as I say he was bound to do, if he intends to head the party in that division of the county; or if Mr. Lane Fox had not been compelled, under the advice of his physician, to relinquish the contest, which he could only have undertaken at the risk of his life, Lord Morpeth would not now occupy a seat in this House. ["Hear, hear."] You may say "Hear, hear;" but what said your party in Yorkshire at the time? The instant they found I was going to make a fair stand-up fight, they said, "Not a moment is to be lost; if we don't strain every nerve we are sure to be beaten." I think the hon. Gentleman said in another part of his speech, that the working men repudiated my doctrines. Now, if that was the case, how is it that I was so successful in exciting a bad feeling between the employer and employed? I think this is a contradiction; but to show that these working men did not repudiate my doctrines (and I am sorry the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding is not in his place), I may tell the House what happened on the day of election. A friend of the noble Lord's who stood near him on the hustings, proposed thrice during the proceedings to the 8,000 working men who had been sent down by the League manufacturers to hold up their hands for the noble Lord, that they should give three groans for Ferrand. Twice they refused: not one man would respond to the call; and surely, if the working men had repudiated my doctrines, they would have responded to the request of their employers, and have given three groans for Ferrand. But is the hon. Member for Sheffield aware that when I was in the West Riding of Yorkshire, I challenged any member of the Anti-Corn-Law League who was a Member of this House, to meet me in public and discuss the question of free trade before the working men. I challenged them at Leeds, at Bradford, and at Huddersfield; but they refused to accept my challenge. Here, in this House, I repeat that challenge; and I dare you to accept it and appear before the manufacturing operatives of the West Riding of Yorkshire. If you wish it I will read to you the challenge I published in the West Riding of Yorkshire—a challenge that was refused there, and is refused here again to-night. How can you say, then, that the working men in the north of England are, to a man, in favour of free trade? I will prove to you to-night before I conclude whether they are or not. With the permission of the House, I will now allude

to what, without intending anything offensive, I must call the disgraceful position in which hon. Members on this side appear before the country. I remember the noble Lord the Member for the city of London rising in his place and asking the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), after he had been placed in power backed by a majority of ninety-one in this House, how he intended to conduct the affairs of this great country. The right hon. Baronet replied, "I am asked by the noble Lord how I intend to conduct the affairs of this nation." Then turning round to the men who had placed him in power, the right hon. Baronet said, "I will walk in the direct path, and in the light of the British Constitution." I believe it is in unison with the spirit of the British Constitution that when a dissolution of Parliament occurs, and a general election takes place, the candidates for the suffrages of the electors should appear before them, and honestly and openly explain, without reserve, their political principles. Not only are they compelled to do this, but they have to undergo a most searching examination; and the electors do not decide for whom they will vote, or in whom they will place confidence, till they have duly weighed the political principles of the candidates who may appear before them. When the last Parliament was dissolved, I believe Her Most Gracious Majesty declared in Her Speech, that She was anxious to take the sense of the nation upon those great questions which then agitated the public mind. When I stood upon the hustings at Leeds by the side of the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Lord Morpeth), by the side of my hon. Friend also Member for the West Riding (Mr. E. Denison), and by the side of the hon. Member for the borough of Leeds (Mr. W. Beckett), I heard this language uttered by the noble Lord. On the 25th of June, 1841, the noble Lord said—

"The cause which I conceive is at the bottom of the great struggle which I am about to commence is a war against monopolists, and it is not before such an assembly as this, or in the Cloth Hall at Leeds, that I can despair of triumph."

Now, that I call a fair and manly way of laying down the principles of free trade. Mr. S. Wortley (the present Lord Wharncliffe), to show his purpose of standing by the Corn Laws, quoted the remark of Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords—

"When I hear my noble Friend (Earl Fitzwilliam) speak of leaving the agriculture of this country wholly without protection, I declare before God I think it the wildest and maddest scheme that ever entered into the mind of man."

But, what had Mr. B. Denison said—the Gentleman who was going to vote against the Government, and to tell the House that he had been deceived into seconding the Address? Sir, I think that noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen opposite once were charged with thimblerig; but, surely they may retort in these days of general apostacy. Well, Mr. B. Denison said, "I think they are attempting to gull the people by what I call the humbug of free trade." Then, the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. W. Beckett) had said—

"Some people tell you to stick fast to English agriculture, and then go to foreign agriculture. I say, stick fast to English agriculture;" and he went on to ask, "What does the English landlord get from agriculture? On the average, wheat land does not pay him more than 24*s.* an acre, when he can get it. That is about 3 per cent. for his money. Now, is there a manufacturer who ever received so low a rate of interest on his capital as 3 per cent? Look to the tenant: he gets not more than 5 per cent for his money; and as for the labourer, he gets no more than 12*s.* per week."

Now, Sir, if the hon. Gentleman is present in this House, I will say, I don't mean to ask him how he means to vote, because I know how he ought to vote. If he is an Englishman, he will stick to English agriculture; if he is an honourable man, he will stick to his hustings' pledges; if he is an honest man, and has changed his principles and opinions upon this subject, let him resign his seat. Let him remember that he stood at the hustings at Leeds under a banner having inscribed on it, "A Beckett never failed us yet." He has gained a name in that borough as "honest William Beckett;" but if he changes on this occasion he will be ever after known, politically speaking, as "dishonest William Beckett." Sir, I now turn to the benches immediately behind the Treasury bench; and I have no doubt that several Members have already begun to tremble, and say, "Is it I he is going to attack? But it is the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. B. Escott) to whom I am about to allude. Let me ask him how he obtained his seat? Has he forgotten the visit he paid to the Buckinghamshire farmers previous to the last election? Has he forgotten drinking their wine, patting them on the back, and giving one cheer more for agriculture; and then marching into Winchester with the other hon. Member, like himself, a supporter of protection? Sir, I like honesty in public men; and if I had been guilty of such conduct as the hon.

Member for Winchester, I should scorn to tread on the floor of the House. Sir, he came here reeking from the hustings, pledged to stand by agriculture to the last moment of his existence; and what is his course now? On the 22nd February, 1842, he made a splendid speech in this House. Sir, he stood there then [pointing to the agricultural benches], among the friends of agriculture, and not behind the Treasury bench; and the next day he went to Mr. Ollivier, of Pall Mall, and got him to publish his speech corrected from the short-hand writer's notes. Sir, he was so kind and obliging as to present me with a copy; and I now, with the permission of the House, will for the first time make use of it. He says, speaking of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton—

"Before my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) called on us, the representatives of the people, to repeal and totally abjure the principle of the law for regulating the importation of corn, it was necessary, in my apprehension, for him to prove two propositions to the satisfaction of this House. It was necessary for him to prove, first, that the distress of certain portions of the people is caused by the principle of the law for regulating the importation of foreign corn. Secondly, that the repeal of all laws founded on that principle, would not cause greater evils to other portions of the community than those which he assumes it would remove. Sir, the hon. Member and his supporters not only do not prove these propositions, they never attempt to argue them; and yet, until these propositions are not only argued, but proved, that man must be, as was well said in another place, a madman, or something worse, who would attack the principle of a law which has not only answered its purpose better than any other principle which has ever been tried, but under which the owners and occupiers of lands have been taught by this House and the Legislature to believe themselves safe and secure. Six Parliaments have maintained this principle. Talk of public faith indeed; here is the faith of Parliament pledged to the landed property of England, pledged not indeed to particular enactments, and clerical details of scales and figures—who could imagine such a folly?—but pledged to the principle of protection—protection without prohibition; but still protection to the home grower. And under this solemn sanction and security, and relying on this faith of Parliament, have they purchased, taken leases, made devises and settlements, laid out vast sums in improvements and expensive systems; married, made plans in life, educated and provided for children in business, and whom they fondly thought were safe under the shelter of that protection beneath which their fathers rested. Is the hon. Gentleman prepared for a system of treachery and confiscation? I know he is not; but I know also that his Motion, if carried, would be equivalent to such a system."

The noble Lord the Member for London made a proposition for a 6*s.* duty. The hon. Member for Winchester, said, "The people of England knew the treachery of such conduct, and spurned it as an insult on their understanding." Where is the treachery now? Where is the insult to the electors now? Especially to the electors of Winchester, who, having called upon him to give up his seat, he refused to do so. Then he referred to the soil, and said—

"The soil they cannot annihilate, nor destroy its perennial bounty. In spite of their foolish projects it will still continue to feed their wrongs and nourish their ingratitude—while its possessors and its cultivators are still the best customers for their trade and manufactures, and maintain the wealth and credit of the country against the subtle lucubrations of economists, or the rashness of disappointed politicians."

Sir, I want to know who are the disappointed politicians now? He goes on:—

"Would a little party of them now ask leave to overset the corner-stone of that commercial policy by which they have grown so great? Whence is this strange insanity? Has too much prosperity made them mad? This question affects the very principles of the Constitution, and the honour no less than the constitution of this House."

I tell him this question affects his honour. I tell him that he is bound in honour to go down to Winchester and resign his seat. He says in his preroration—

"Sir, I know not what the noble Lord will do next; but having no proof of national benefits to be derived from his changes, or those of his more rational associates; and seeing all around me much of the distress and mischief, the effect of ill-considered change, I am resolved, for the benefit of the country and the preservation of its liberties, to stand by the landed interest; which is only another name for the English interest, and to oppose by the best means in my power—and now by voting for the measure of Her Majesty's Ministers (not the present measure)—the schemes of those, who for years past have shown by nothing so much as their rashness in new legislation, their hostility to English liberty and their incapacity to govern their country."

That, Sir, is the speech delivered by the hon. Member for Winchester, who now sits behind the First Lord of the Treasury as one of his supporters. There is an old saying in our part of England, and I think it is a very true one, "Birds of a feather flock together." I don't know whether the hon. Member for Cirencester (Mr. Cripps) is in his place. He is, I believe, the last Lord of the Treasury who was elected. It is high time, I think, that there were other two Members. On the 14th of August, 1845, he went down to his constituents, and said—

"Had I thought that I was rendering myself liable to the charge of supporting a man who could be called, with any show of justice, a traitor to his party, I would have relinquished the highly

prized honour of being your representative, and sheltered myself, as I could have done without dishonour or loss of character, under that offer of permanent and lucrative employment referred to by Mr. Mullings, but which I had no wish should be made public here."

I heard the right hon. Baronet the Vice President of the Board of Trade stand up in this House last night, and expound the great brass case with great ability, as counsel for the First Lord of the Treasury, but certainly without convincing the House of the truth of his argument. But when I knew that the right hon. Baronet, when he was attacking us for opposing Her Majesty's Government, had either in his red box or in his pocket an address from his constituents, demanding the resignation of his seat for having broken his pledges, I did look him in the face and thought—but I won't say what I thought of him, though I know what his constituents think of him. I will now allude to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wiltshire, the Secretary at War (Mr. Sidney Herbert). I think his personal honour is at stake at the present time. On the 15th of February, 1845, exactly one year from this time, when accepting the office he now occupies, he went down to his constituents, asking them again for their confidence; and he said—

"It is now twelve years since I first appeared before you as a candidate. I was then a young man, just entering into public life, and I then asked for your suffrages upon trust and credit, undertaking to use such abilities as I possessed in your service, and for the advancement of the public interest. During that time in my Parliamentary course I may have made many mistakes; but, gentlemen, we are all fallible, and in the various questions which came before Parliament many difficulties have arisen in the progress of various measures upon which I may have been in error; but, I believe that the course I have taken generally has been to conciliate your support, because I believe my views have generally coincided with those of my constituents."

He then went on to address his constituents upon the Corn Laws, and he said that he thought that protection was necessary for agriculture—

"He did not think that that protection was one bit larger than it ought to be, looking to the burdens of agriculture;" and he finished by saying, that "he hoped and believed that there was among the people of this country, as there certainly was by Her Majesty's Ministers, a determination to uphold that law."

I am glad to see the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department in his place. He, too, went before his constituents when he accepted office; and how stands he pledged to the electors of Dorchester? I tell him, too, that his personal honour is at stake. He may dispose of his changes of opinion by one fling of his arm; but he will not dispose of his constituents in that manner. He is bound to redeem his pledges on the hustings; and if his political opinions have changed, I tell him that he is bound as a man of honour to resign his place into their hands once more, in order to enable them to be freely and honourably represented. I have read the speech which the right hon. Baronet delivered to his constituents on that occasion, and was delighted with its talent and ability; and I think the best thing the protectionists could do would be to print it in a cheap form and circulate it through the country, as the First Lord of the Treasury used to do with his speeches when in opposition to the Whigs. I was then one of the rank and file of the Conservative party; and I used to receive large packages of Sir R. Peel's speeches on the Corn Laws, which were sold at one penny each. Who sent them to me I never found out; but I suspect that the right hon. Baronet had heard that I was a warm and earnest supporter of his principles, and, therefore, favoured me with packages of his speeches, carriage paid, which I circulated among the people in my neighbourhood; and I rejoice to say that they made many proselytes, and were the chief cause of the return of Mr. Stuart Wortley as a protectionist. But to return to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department: he said—

"A friend of mine said, 'And what about the Corn Laws?' I said, I would not avoid that subject; nor will I. I conceive the true principle to be, that a protective duty should be substituted for absolute prohibition; and I think that, as a general rule, it should be the smallest amount which, on a careful revision, would be found to give to native industry fair play in its competition with foreign countries, the circumstances attending our relation to those countries being duly considered."

Then he went on to quote what poor Lord Melbourne said on the Corn Laws:—

"What did Lord Melbourne say in the House of Lords, when the proposal to alter the Corn Laws was mooted in that House? He declared that it would be absolute madness in any one to make such a proposition."

The right hon. Baronet then proceeded to say—"I never have and never will shrink from public opinion." Then, why don't he go down to his constituents? I am delighted to see the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) in his place. The right hon. Baronet thus spoke of the noble Lord and his party:—

"The late Government is fallen, to rise no more.

The question now at issue is this—shall the Conservative or democratic principle prevail? Shall Messrs. Roebuck, Warburton, O'Connell, and Bowring, sway the destinies of this great Empire; or shall Sir R. Peel continue Prime Minister?"

Let me ask the First Lord of the Treasury, who have been his supporters of late? Where has been the "democratic Roebuck?" Where has been the "democratic Warburton?" Where has been the "democratic O'Connell," who was only a short time ago a "convicted conspirator?" The right hon. Baronet continued his address to his constituents as follows:—

"My opinion is, that a further prevalence of the democratic principle would prove most destructive to the institutions and great interests of the country. Should that unfortunate day ever dawn upon the political horizon when the principles of democracy will be paramount, degraded indeed will be our fate—

'The day when thou, imperial Troy! must bend
'And see thy warriors fall, thy glorious end.'

But I will add—

'May I be cold before that dreadful day,
'Pressed with a load of monumental clay.'"

After this poetical fervour, the right hon. Baronet concluded his speech thus—

"It now only remains for you to decide whether I shall return to the House of Commons as your representative. (The right hon. Baronet then sat down amidst most vehement and long-continued shouts of applause.) As no other candidate presented himself, Sir J. Graham was pronounced duly elected, and was afterwards chaired through the town, with the usual honours."

Two extracts more from an election speech, and I have done with that part of my subject. I think these last will be the severest and most tremendous cut of all. The one is a quotation from the nomination speech of the First Lord of the Treasury, and the other from his speech after his election; and I tell the right hon. Baronet that his personal honour is also at stake. On the 29th of June, 1841, Sir R. Peel, on the occasion of his nomination for Tamworth, said—

"I feel that confidence, because I have no reason to suppose that your political sentiments have undergone a change; and, if they have not, I am conscious that I have faithfully adhered in public life to every profession which I made upon these hustings, and have kept every engagement into which I entered. . . I now come, I repeat, to a most important question—that of the introduction of foreign corn. . . I prefer the principle of the ascending and descending scale; and I do not consider, when I look to the burdens which land in this country is subjected to, that a fixed duty of 8*s.* per quarter on corn brought here from Poland and the north of Europe, will afford a sufficient protection to the land of this country. Look at the amount of poor rates levied from land in this country, compared with the amount levied from the profits of manufactures. Who pays the highway rate? Who pays the church rate? Who pays the poor rate and the tithe? I say, not altogether, but chiefly, the landed proprietor of this country; and if there be corn produced by other land not subject to those burdens, it would be clearly not just to the land of this country to admit the corn on equal terms."

Sir, there was a poll in the borough of Tamworth; and the electors, believing the pledges of the right hon. Baronet, that he would protect agriculture, returned him to the House. He said the other night that he thought he was wrong (on the occasion of his violating his pledges to the University of Oxford) in resigning his seat; but, Sir, I will prove to him now, that he is bound to resign his seat, and go down to Tamworth, and place himself in the hands of his constituents there. After the last election the right hon. Baronet told them that—

"They had placed him in the proud position of representing them in Parliament, and they might depend upon it that he would be faithful to the professions he had made; and in adhering to those Conservative principles which in the face of his constituency he had professed he would, while at the same time he paid due respect to the just rights of those who might differ from him in religious opinions, do everything in his power to maintain the fundamental institutions of the country in Church and State, and to advance the glory and happiness of the country."

Now, Sir, the right hon. Baronet is pledged, in the face of his constituents—he pledged himself of his own free will—to stand by his principles and the pledges he gave on that occasion; and I call on him, not as Prime Minister of this country, not as once the leader of a great party, but as an honest Member of this House, to resign his seat and go down to his constituents for their approval or disapproval. I said this should be the last quotation; but perhaps you will allow me, as a make-weight, to throw in a remark of his hon. Colleague (Captain A'Court) when he contested the borough of Tamworth. His Colleague said—

"He was certain that the prosperity of Tamworth depended mainly on the prosperity of the agriculturists; and if they were permanently depressed, every farmer, shopkeeper, and labourer in it would be involved in one common ruin. With that feeling he would never consent to take from the British farmer such fair protection as would enable him to compete on equal terms with the foreign corn-grower, nor consent to reduce the English labour to the same condition as the ill-fed and ill-paid labourer of the Continent."

What a figure to cut before his constituents! Can you [pointing to the Treasury bench] look these hon. Gentlemen—honourable by the courtesy of this House,

and honourable by character in their political principles—can you look them in the face at this present moment, and say you are conducting yourselves with common honesty? Do not tell me you were bound to reaccept office, and carry those measures in this House. I tell you you were not bound to do so; but that the moment you found yourselves unable to carry out the principles of protection, you were bound as honourable men at once to appeal to the country, and ask the constituencies of England for their approval of your conduct. Now, I believe if the right hon. Baronet had pursued that course at first, he might have rallied around him a great party in the country; but I must tell him that the people of Great Britain and Ireland view with unmitigated disgust his contemptible apostacy and tergiversation. Let me ask you, how has the right hon. Baronet been supported during this discussion? I know that hon. Gentlemen who are on terms of personal friendship with right hon. Members sitting on the Treasury bench, have almost wept for them when they heard them addressing this House—they felt so much for their degraded position. And well they might. I could see hon. Gentlemen who were also apostates from the principles they held at the last election, and who sat on the benches behind them, endeavouring, night after night, to muster courage enough to address the House; but up to this moment their courage, as well as their consciences, have failed. The hon. Member for Bath addressed the House; but he failed for the first time in this House, and the hon. Member for Bolton said a few words; but the democrat was consistent in his principles, and the Conservative was not. Without following this subject any further, I must remark that no man, whatever party he belongs to, in this House, can contend that the House of Commons has any right whatever, either constitutionally or in common honesty, to decide on this question. It is not at all impossible that an Address may be moved in this House to Her Majesty, that she will be graciously pleased to send us where we should have been long since—before our constituents. If that is the case, I now avow the course which I will then pursue. So soon as this division is over, I will obtain the list, and look out the name of every man on this side of the House who shall vote for the Government measure. I shall then go to Peel's coffee-house, in Fleet-street; I will there look over all the country papers of Great Britain and Ireland, and will see how Members pledged themselves at the last election to stand by the principles of protection; and when the question again comes before this House, I will be in my place to show up the whole party who have deserted from the cause of protection. Even the most democratic Gentlemen may have to go to their constituents—even the Member for Nottingham, though I know it is a very expensive place; but he must take care to fight the question on constitutional grounds. I have narrowly watched the tone of this debate; and it is a most extraordinary circumstance that, during the whole of the discussion, the representatives of the manufacturing body have scarcely been heard. We are told by hon. Gentlemen that the population is increasing so rapidly in this country that it is necessary to extend our manufactures. But before we do that, it is our duty to inquire what has already been done by this House for the moral and social condition of the working classes. I could go back for the last sixty years, and bring before the House some valuable information on this head; but I will only read one or two extracts from a debate that took place on the 3rd of April, 1816. On that occasion, Mr. R. Gordon said:—

"It appears that overseers of parishes in London are in the habit of contracting with the manufacturers of the north for the disposal of their children; and these manufacturers agree to take one idiot for every nineteen sane children. In this manner, waggon loads of these little creatures are sent down to be at the perfect disposal of their new masters."

This was what was called the apprenticeship system, and it has been introduced again under the New Poor Law. On the 19th of February, 1818, the late Sir R. Peel thus expressed himself in the House of Commons:—

"About fifteen years ago, I brought in a Bill for the regulation of apprentices in cotton manufactories. At that time they were the description of persons most employed in these manufactories. I myself had a thousand of them, and I felt the necessity of some regulation with respect to them. . . . . It was notorious that children of a very tender age were dragged from their beds some hours before daylight, and confined in the factories not less than fifteen hours; and it is also notoriously the opinion of the faculty, that no children of eight or nine years of age can bear this degree of hardship with impunity to their health and constitution."

The present Sir Robert Peel on the same day said—

"It is proved that children are employed in

Lancashire fifteen hours a day, and after any stoppage, from five in the morning to ten in the evening, seventeen hours; and this often three weeks at a time. On a Sunday they are employed from six in the morning to twelve in cleaning the machinery."

It is in evidence that children are employed at as early an age as five years. That was the origin of the cotton trade in Lancashire; and what have been the results? We are told by manufacturers in this House that they are enjoying even comfort, and making great wages, and that it is necessary for the agriculturists to send their surplus population for the purpose of being employed in the manufacturing districts. You will hear from the evidence of a manufacturer who was once a Member of this House what were the sufferings of the manufacturing population. This gentleman, in 1831, said—

"Domestic manufactures were almost extinct, and the population, which was formerly scattered through the country, was impressed with a distinct character, besotting themselves, particularly on Saturday evenings and Sunday, with ale, beer, and gin. The quantity of gin drank was enormous, and even children of tender age drank it. Many took large quantities of opium, sometimes laudanum in pills, and sometimes an anodyne draught of the same kind. They were also exposed to severe and unremitting labour. Their work was most laborious, only exceeded by mowing. They worked twelve hours a day, while farm labourers worked only ten hours. The children did not receive that attention from their mothers which was necessary for their welfare."

["Question!"] The hon. Member for Bath cries "Question." Sir, I am speaking to the question. The question is the increase of manufactures in this country, and the sacrifice of agriculture for that purpose; and I am now showing what has been the effect of the manufacturing system. I do not wonder that the hon. and learned Member for Bath feels uncomfortable under the circumstances. [Mr. ROEBUCK: Oh, no. I beg your pardon.] I thought the hon. Member was a representative of the people. I will now, with his leave proceed with my quotation:—

"The quantity of opium they took was very large, and a very considerable number of the children feel victims to diseases."

Now (and I speak to Gentlemen of the League) who is the gentleman I am quoting? Why, no less a person than Mr. R. Gregg, and one of that party who call on the Legislature to give the death-blow to agriculture, in order that they may be able the better to absorb in manufactures the surplus population of the agricultural districts. Dr. Kay Shuttleworth confirms all that Mr. Gregg says; and he adds that the people in Manchester are in a state bordering on savage life. Dr. Shuttleworth continues—

"The moral check has no influence in preventing the rapid increase of population. The existence of cheap and redundant labour in the market has a tendency to reduce its general price."

That is what the League are aiming at. They want to be be able to beat down wages. I have also another authority, Dr. Cooke Taylor. He says, speaking of manufacturing population—

"I have seen misery in many forms; I have been in the huts and hovels of Ireland, when my native land was visited with the scourge of the cholera; I have visited the cellars of Liverpool, where existence assumes an aspect that ceases to be human; I have penetrated into the wynds and vennels of Glasgow (localities that would try to the utmost the hardest of hearts and the strongest of stomachs); but nowhere have I seen misery which so agonized my very soul, as that which I have witnessed in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire. And why? Because the extreme of wretchedness was there, and there only, combined with a high tone of moral dignity, and a marked sense of propriety—a decency, cleanliness, and order, the elements which produced the vast wealth I have described, and which do not merit the intense suffering I have witnessed. I was beholding the gradual immolation of the noblest and most valuable population that ever existed in this country, or any other under heaven."

Yes, I say they are murdered by the factory system, in order that a few may grow rich. Are hon. Gentlemen aware that Mr. Gregg has stated before a Committee of this House that the Saxon hosiers have undersold the hosiers of the midland counties, who are in such a frightful state that they have not, for fifteen years past, averaged 7*s.* a week for their labour? And all this, although there is a protection of 20 per cent. The facts which I am able to bring before the House are worth a thousand statements by three months' converts. Sir, in 1843 I presented a petition to this House, signed by 25,000 frame-work knitters of Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, in which they prayed the House to prohibit foreign hosiery till foreign States ceased to prohibit English hosiery. After I had presented that petition, the right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade, who cannot find a place in all England to send him to Parliament, and whose absence from this House I deeply regret, though not the cause of it, employed Mr. Muggeridge, as Commissioner, to go down and ascertain the truth of the statements in the petition; and that gentleman made a report, some passages of which I will

read to the House. At page 103 of his Report he says—

"They labour fifteen and eighteen hours a day for 3s. 7d. a week wages. Many women and children are employed. One-third of the women of the manufacturing population are working in trades. The employment of women is reducing wages."

Mr. Muggeridge examined Dr. Shaw Leicester, who says—

"The mortality of children under five years of age is about 49 per cent. of the deaths; that this arises from the general neglect of the mothers. They are in the stocking frames, and they are not in the habit of hiring their children out to the same extent that they are in many of the manufacturing districts. The children of the poor are very much neglected. Dr. Shaw speaks of the physical debility of the frame-work knitters, as being greater than that of the manufacturers in the north, and says that it is caused from the deprivation of the necessaries of life. That their food is bread, cheese, gruel, tea, and a proportion of meat, but to no great extent; that they got better wages in former years, and had more regular habits, and consequently they were enabled to obtain good sustenance, working at a very fair rate of remuneration with comparatively less labour."

Now I am going to justify myself for having made the statement a short time ago, that a wholesale system of murder is carried on in the manufacturing districts. He says—

"Among the poorer classes it is a common practice of mothers to administer Godfrey's cordial and laudanum to their infants; the object is to keep them quiet while the mother is at work."

I ask the hon. Member for Finsbury to pay attention to what I am now quoting; this is horrible; it proves the poor in such a state of starvation, that they murdered their children by wholesale. An eminent druggist is examined by Mr. Muggeridge; he says—

"He has known an infant killed with three drops of laudanum; that nothing was said about it; infants go off quietly; they are not like grown people."

Another eminent druggist

"Had heard of four children in the same family who had died in the same way; the infants who die in a more insidious manner, become pale, and emaciated, and tremulous, and at last seem to sink from emaciation or decline. The system has considerably increased since witness has been in the business, which he attributes to the abject poverty of the people."

I do ask the House of Commons to get this Report of Mr. Muggeridge's, and to read it; I never in my life heard anything more frightful than the whole of this evidence. Hear what a pawnbroker says; and I am sorry the hon. Member for Dublin is not in his place. I think I know the reason why he is absent; but if he had been here I think he would have said that nothing which was narrated at Goatacre could be compared with this. At page 109, a pawnbroker says—

"They pawn their blankets in the morning, and fetch them out at night, for a day's subsistence, which costs each poor person 3d. a week."

Now hear what Mr. Commissioner Muggeridge says:—

"The social condition of the frame-work knitters presents unvarying evidence of the distress and depression almost inseparable from the low rate of earnings to which the trade has been subjected for many years past. This is especially observable in the state of their dwellings, which are, every day, diminishing in comfort and respectability; their furniture becoming less and less, as time destroys or necessity compels them to part with it piece by piece—their clothing usually of the worst kind, and the sacrifices they make to support existence, often greatly aggravating the evils attendant on their penury."

He adds—

"So far as their moral condition may be judged of by their attendance at places of public worship, the evidence from all quarters tends to establish an almost total disregard of this solemn duty."

Such is the statement of the Commissioner appointed by the Government to inquire into the condition of the manufacturing population in the midland counties. If the time of night had allowed me, I would have produced before this House a startling statement with regard to the manufacturing population of the county of Norfolk; but here we have Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the midland counties, pronounced by incontrovertible evidence to be in a state bordering upon savage life, and the working population reduced to such a state of misery and want, that they do not hesitate to murder their offspring. Are we to be told that, with the manufacturing population in such a frightful state as this, we, the agricultural party in this House, are to consent to hand over the agricultural labourers, who have looked up to us and to our ancestors for centuries for succour and support, to your tender mercies, and allow them, in the language of Dr. Cooke Taylor, to be immolated, that a few cotton lords may get rich? Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, a few nights ago, said that crime was greatly reduced in this country. I tell him that that is not the fact with regard to the manufacturing districts. I entreat his attention to this. Perhaps I may attract it when I tell him that the protectionists are 462 ahead in South Notts to-day up to 1 o'clock. Now, having attracted

his attention, let me state to the House what Mr. Justice Coleridge declared in his charge to the grand jury on the 29th of November, 1844—a winter assize, mark, in a manufacturing district:—

"Another cause for a winter assize, he lamented to say, must be considered to be the steady increase of crime throughout the country, and in their own county; that increase, too, being not so much observable in crimes of a petty nature, as in those of a more serious character. Within the last eight years the number of prisoners had nearly doubled in their own county; and though it was true that the population had increased—that the police were more efficient than formerly—and that capital punishment had in a great measure been removed, yet he did not think that it was possible, by the application of those facts, satisfactorily to explain away the great incubus which seemed to hang over them."

That is the statement in relation to the manufacturing county of York; and, in contradiction to the statement of the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary, I tell him that the West Riding gaol at Wakefield was never known so full of prisoners as at this moment. When I was in the north of England attending the West Riding election, I came in contact with large bodies of the working population, and they instructed me to bring their case before this House; and they said that their battle was the battle of labour against capital, and that so far from an extension of trade in this country being of the slightest benefit to them, it had been the bitterest curse. They produced statements of the greatest importance to prove to me that this was the fact; which statements I have to thank my hon. Friend the Member for East Cornwall, for having at his expense published to the world; and let me tell this House, that it would be well if hon. Members would purchase the book, and in a few pages read the history of a working man in the manufacturing districts of the north of England during the last few years; it is written by a working man, but a man who has shown ability far above his order. He traces all the sufferings which the working classes have endured, not to a restrictive policy in your manufactures and commerce, but to overtrading, and the glutting of the markets. He proves in these pages, that the more your manufactured goods have increased, the more dreadful have been the sufferings of the working population; and with the permission of the House I should just like to read some fifteen or twenty lines. He says that, in 1781, 5,198,000 lb. of cotton were used in the manufactories of the cotton districts of England, and that the mean increase from 1781 to 1841 was from that quantity to 528,000,0000 lb.; the trade increased 101 times, or, in other words, where we manufactured 1 lb. of cotton in 1781, we manufactured 101 lb. in 1841. This working man goes on to say—

"We presume the Corn Law repealers could not expect a more rapid increase of trade than has here taken place during the last sixty years, supposing that all restrictions were removed from our commerce; and surely if there were a shadow of truth in the statements that 'increased trade would give increased prosperity to the working classes,' they ought, indeed, to be supremely happy."

Now, hear the effect upon the wages:—

"During the periods included in the above table, it will be seen, however that the hand-loom weaver was reduced from 33*s*. 3*d*. for weaving 20 yards of a 60 reed, down to 3*s*. 9*d*. for 24 yards. Now, if the hand-loom weaver of 1841 was paid for weaving 24 yards at the same rate as the weaver of 1790 for weaving 20 yards, he should receive 39*s*. 10¾*d*., instead of which he only received 3*s*. 9*d*.; that is, he received 1*s*. where he used to receive 10*s*."

Such is the effect of your increased manufactures upon the hand-loom weavers in the cotton districte. Can anything be more frightful than the sufferings which increased trade has brought upon those poor people? But this working man goes on and shows the price of calico; and, speaking of the amount of money expended for clothes, he says—

"In 1815, when the weaver was paid 28*s*. for the same work which he now performs for 5*s*., he had to pay 1*s*. per yard for calico; in 1843, he might purchase it for 4*d*."

And he shows that this, and the cheapening of silk, linen, and woollen, give him a a total saving of 5*l*. in the year; but then "the loss in his wages amounts to 58*l*. 10*s*." But the power-loom weavers have even suffered more extensively in a shorter time, than has been the lot of the hand-loom weavers. The working man says that—

"In 1824, the power-loom weavers at Sidebottom's mill, Waterside, had for weaving 24 yards, 21 picks to the quarter-inch, 2*s*.; they now receive 1*s*. for the same length, with one pick more to the quarter, which ought to be 1*d*. extra."

Another master paid 2*s*. 8*d*. in 1825 for twenty-four yards, and in 1836 only 1*s*. 2*d*., and the wages have fallen still lower since. I could quote many other statements equally startling from this book; and, late as it is, there is one statement made by Mr. Muggeridge, the Commissioner for inquiring into the state of the manufacturing population in the midland counties, which I must not overlook. It shows that what

brought 2*l.* 3*s.* in 1829, brought only 19*s.* in 1839, while the trade of Rochdale had doubled. A weaver of Bolton, who was examined before the Select Committee of the House, being asked whether he would be as well off if the Corn Laws were repealed, replied that he should not if he got all his food for nothing; and when further asked why he thought so, his answer was, because a reduction had taken place in his wages amounting to more than the price of all the food he needed, and the clothes he wore. The same volume also contained evidence of a startling character, as to the effects which the introduction of machinery to so large an extent in manufactures, had produced on the condition of the labouring classes. The other evening I was accused by the hon. Member for Stroud of being opposed to all machinery. That charge is totally unfounded. I am in favour of machinery so long as it is subservient to manual labour; but the moment it supersedes manual labour, I think with the late Sir R. Peel, that it becomes the bitterest curse of this country. It has been asserted that the price of food does not regulate wages. Does the hon. Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) assert that the price of food does not regulate wages? That hon. Gentleman, on the 26th of June, 1835, said in this House—

"We export 50,000,000*l.* sterling of manufactures. Does anybody imagine that they are not affected in foreign markets by the price of foreign corn? Does any one suppose that they have not to suffer in value from the fact of their having to meet, as rivals, with goods produced in countries where the price of corn is lower, and the average of wages less, than in England?"

Does the hon. Gentleman admit that now? Then he admits that the price of food regulates the rate of wages. The hon. and learned Member for the county of Cork, in the very lucid statement which he made a few days ago, also recognised the principle. Mr. Ricardo has very often been quoted. Will any hon. Gentleman deny that Mr. Ricardo was of that opinion? I can also refer to the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Muntz). Then it is admitted that the price of food regulates wages. If that position had been denied, I should have called into court Mr. Rathbone Gregg, who, after remarking that foreigners were able to compete with us successfully from the low price of food in their own countries, went on to say that we must ultimately come to the repeal of the Corn Laws; and, referring to the effect on the home demand, observed that itwas but trifling comparedwith the foreign. Then he asked the other party how men were to compete with the foreign labourer? He remarked that what the working people of this country considered the necessaries of life were not considered so on the Continent; and that was one reason why the price of food must be reduced. He was asked, from his practical knowledge of cotton-spinning, whether he was a competent judge of the mills he had seen on the Continent; and his answer was, "Yes, I looked upon them with a somewhat uncomfortable eye." And, in answer to a question relative to the machinery used in the foreign mills, he said, "They had all the newest inventions. Even in the remotest part of Germany they obtain them as soon as we do in England." It has been said that foreign manufactures are equal or superior to ours. Why, it was not so before the right hon. Gentleman legalized the exportation of machinery. We have been committing a suicidal act, not only in allowing our working classes to be starved to death under the system which has been introduced, but in admitting the foreigner to compete with us by the exportation of our own machinery. Another charge made by hon. Gentlemen opposite is, that the proposition on the part of the manufacturers of the north of England to absorb and use up their labourers, originated with the agriculturists. Will any hon. Gentleman opposite, connected with the Anti-Corn-Law League (and I see the hon. Member for Wolverhampton in his place), dare to repeat that statement now? He will not make that statement; he will not, because he has always conducted the Corn-Law question in this House with the most gentlemanlike feeling; and he never made a statement against the agricultural party except one, and that one he could not prove. The agricultural party in this House, the gentry of England, never heard of that proposal to absorb and use up the surplus population of the south of England till the attempt was made to carry it into effect; and as soon as they heard of it, they caused placards to be put forth, warning the people not to go. I proceed on the authority of this letter, from a Quaker, in my statement as to what I here call the traffic in white slaves, as I shall prove it to be:—

"Turton, near Bolton, 9th of 9th Month, 1834.

"Respected Friend,—I take the liberty of forwarding for thy consideration a few observations on the New Poor Law Bill, the leading principle of which I most cordially approve, whilst in some of its details I fear it will be found practically

defective. I would not venture to suggest an opinion to you, who have already so ample a store of evidence, were it not that I feel so much the vast importance of the subject, and am most anxious that, whilst a change is making, the law which is substituted for that now in force may be made applicable to the wants and circumstances of all parts of the community. The poor rates of Lancashire have long been the lowest of any county in the kingdom, in consequence of the great demand for labour caused by the increase of manufactories. Full employment in every department was never more easy to be found than now, consequently wages have advanced in most operative employments, and particularly so in the least skilful; spade labourers, for instance, who last year had 2*s*. 3*d*. per day, have now 2*s*. 6*d*. to 3*s*. Hand-loom weavers have been much wanted, and their wages advanced, on an average, 10 per cent. This bespeaks a scarcity of labourers here. I am most anxious that every facility be given to the removal of the labourers from one county to another, according to the demand for labour: this would have a tendency to equalize wages, as well as to prevent in a degree some of the turn-outs which have been of late so prevalent."

Let me call the attention of the House to the cold-blooded cruelty of this. At the very time that the writer complained that the wages of hand-loom weavers had risen 10 per cent, a Committee was inquiring into their condition, and hearing evidence, which proved of the men surrounding this man's mill that they were living on $2\frac{3}{4}d$. a day. Is not this disgraceful? What would the House say of any man who could be guilty of such conduct? Mr. Ashworth was a member of the Anti-Corn-Law League — so distinguished a member as to be considered the king of the League; and such was his language. Nay, more than this, it was proved that the hand-loom weavers at that time were in such a state that many of them had not worn a shirt for five years, that they were clothed in rags, that they had no furniture, no plates to eat from, no chairs or tables, only a chest that served them for table and drawers was all the furniture in the house. That was the state of the hand-loom weavers when this letter was written. Another member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, a manufacturer, a gentleman who subscribes his thousands to the League fund, also wrote a letter, dated the 17th of September, 1834, only three months after the former one, as a kind of refresher to Mr. Chadwick. The letter repeated the same request for a supply of labourers, urging the favourable nature of the opportunity, and hoping that some channel of communication should be opened through the Poor Law Commissioners' office, or some other establishment, by which the manufacturers might be placed in communication with the overcharged parishes, and lists of families be transmitted. And let the House listen to what follows; the letter goes on—

"As the variety of our wants is great, we may require lists of small families or great ones, men and women, grown persons or children, widows or orphans."

This is the proposition that came from Mr. Gregg to the Poor Law Commissioners, and his proposition was adopted. I hold in my hand a regular invoice which was sent by a family that was packed off from their native parish to a manufacturing district, and I also have here an extract from an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, stating that the migration of labourers into the manufacturing districts would be the means of re-elevating the character of the agricultural population of the south of England, and calling the gentlemen of those counties "system-mongers," because they placarded their parishes with warnings to their labourers not to be taken in, and not to go to Lancashire to be absorbed and "used up." The article concludes with these lines:—

"It gives us pleasure to record the success in this way of another effort to improve the condition of a laborious and deserving class; and we trust that which we have now written may pave the way to further successful experiments of the same kind."

Two years ago I moved for certain returns, which were to prove that the agricultural population had been worked to death in the manufacturing districts. The House ordered the Poor Law Commissioners to account for the tens of thousands of labourers who had been induced to leave their homes, and go to Yorkshire and Lancashire; but the only return that could be made was of about 8,000 who had so migrated: they could account for their leaving the south of England, but they could not account for their return. I can prove that they have been worked to death; but before I do that I must state that the extraordinary documents connected with the Poor Law Commissioners and their assistants have come into my hands within the last few days. The country will now begin to know what has been going on in Somerset House for the last few years, and how the Commissioners have been playing into the hands of the Anti-Corn-Law League. I have received a letter from Mr. H. Gibbons, Bledlow Ridge, West Wycombe, Bucks, inclosing an account forwarded from Messrs. Ashworth to that parish for charges for persons belonging to it who had been tempted to migrate to Egerton Mills in

1835, at the instigation of the Poor Law Commissioner, —Gilbert, Esq., and Messrs. Ashworth and Greggs. The charges were for medical attendance and allowances to different families, and amounted to 61*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* A part of this was paid, and a prompt order sent that no farther advances would be made by the Union. The consequence of this was that Messrs. Ashworth wrote to the guardians, stating that "after the service they had rendered to the parish of Bledlow, they considered this as a very unworthy return; and pressing for the repayment of money they had advanced in sums of 4*s.* 6*d.* a week to a widow named Avery. What will the House think of this? The Poor Law Commissioners have paid to Messrs. Ashworth the sum of 47*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* in aid of wages; paid it to a firm which proposed that labourers should be sent to their district in order to reduce the wages! This is a pretty exposure. You hear now the sufferings which a few of those families who have been worked up in the manufacturing districts have endured in a short period of time. The agricultural labourers were promised that if they went into the north of England they would go into a land, as it were, "flowing with milk and honey;" but what the sufferings were they endured have been described by the hon. Members for Bolton and Manchester in this House. The hon. Member for Manchester, the representative of the town the cotton spinners residing in which boasted a short time since that they could buy up all the land of England, declared that the population of that place was starving to death; that in many cases—

"Whole families are compelled to pawn the clothes they wear in the day for the purpose of redeeming the bedding on which they are to take their nightly repose, and who are able to redeem their clothes in the morning only by replaeing their bedding in the hands of the pawdbroker."

The hon. and learned Member for Bolton declared that the people of that town were dying for want of food, and were glad to exist on the refuse of dungheaps! This was the state of the working people in the manufacturing districts in five years time after the Anti-Corn-Law people proposed to the Poor Law Commissioners, that the agricultural labourers should go down to the north of England. I hold in my hand two statements, one of which is a document laid on the Table of this House, which will account for the agricultural labourers being brought down to Lancashire, and the House shall hear what has become of them. Then, I think, the agricultural Members in this House will receive a warning this night sufficient to make them ten times more determined to oppose the measure of the Government, which, it has been openly avowed, will throw out of cultivation the poorer lands of the country, and which will therefore compel the labourers employed on them to go down to the manufacturing districts. Let the House hear how the manufacturers treat the poor workmen, and I much doubt whether hon. Members opposite will not themselves be obliged to say that this does indeed far surpass anything that has been exposed at Goatacre. Mr. Charles Trimmer, a factory inspector engaged in 1837, 1838, and 1839, the three succeeding years to the removal of the agricultural labourers, reported that in that time 340 cases of accident had been taken to the infirmary at Stockport, out of which 36 were owing to the parties being caught by the machinery whilst cleaning it in a moving state. Out of these 340 cases, he states, that he only knows of two in which the manufacturers have made any reparation or compensation to the injured parties. Thus it appears that 340 poor labourers have been torn limb from limb in three years by the machinery of the free-trade manufacturers, and carried into the Stockport infirmary, and yet only two have received the slightest compensation. I challenge hon. Members opposite who profess Anti-Corn-Law League doctrines, to produce one case in this country of an English country gentleman having a labourer lamed in his employment, without having instantly provided for his family. I challenge them to send their paid lecturers, convicted blasphemers, and discharged soldiers, with the stripes of the cat-o'-nine-tails on their back, to inquire and to produce one instance of cruelty on the part of the country gentlemen, similar to what I have just described. But the House shall hear from the lips of a manufacturer, and a Member of this House, what has become of the agricultural labourers. The Poor Law Commissioners refused a return on this subject to the House, but I will now produce one. The hon. Member here read a paper, of which the following is the substance:—

"In many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly, he (the author of the statement) feared, in the guilty county to which he belonged, cruelties the most heartrending were practised on the unoffending labourers. They were harassed to the brink of death by excessive labour; they were flogged, fettered, and tortured, and, in many

cases, scarred to the bone, and even in some instances driven to commit suicide to avoid the cruelties practised on them; and yet the profits of the manufacturers were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite which it should have satisfied."

This is the history of the manufacturing labourers, who in 1836, 1837, and 1838, were torn from their green lanes and shady alleys, and were driven down to the manufacturing districts, for the purpose of being absorbed and used up, to use the words of Mr. Gregg to the Poor Law Commissioners. On this subject I appeal to the hon. Member for Oldham, and I challenge any one to deny his statements. That gentleman has earned for himself, in the north of England, the title of the "Poor man's Friend:" he is a manufacturer of the old English school, and is looked on by his workpeople as a father, and he tells the world that you of the Anti-Corn-Law League are a set of tyrants. This is a dreadful exposure; and if any Member can deny one of these statements, I challenge him to do so; but if they are true, it is the duty of the Government, as well as of the agricultural Members, to demand that agriculture shall be protected, and that the agricultural labourers shall exist on the lands on which they have been born; they being content to live on moderate comforts, as of old, rather than to be sacrificed and immolated by the manufacturers and cotton lords of Lancashire. I have not exposed one quarter of the cruelties I intended to have done; but the time will arrive when I shall do so. I am inclined to believe that I have said to-night sufficient to be remembered for many years to come by the Anti-Corn-Law League. Having shown the cruelty of these persons to their working people, I will now proceed to expose their selfishness. The House will recollect how I exposed a worthy alderman, who, with respect to an article in which he was interested, asked me to vote against free-trade principles, observing, "in this world every one for himself." I will now refer to Mr. G. Wilson, the president of the Anti-Corn Law League, who, it appears, has also adopted the motto of "every one for himself in this world." He is a dealer in starch; and when the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government proposed, in 1842, to reduce the duty on starch from 9*l.* 10*s.* the cwt. to 5*l.*, Mr. G. Wilson said, "Oh! this will never do; my starch trade will be injured;" and, therefore, the chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law League convened a meeting at Manchester of all the starch-dealers of the kingdom, at which he presided, and a resolution was adopted to the effect that a deputation should go from the meeting to the right hon. Baronet, and use their influence with him in favour of starch. The deputation waited on the right hon. Baronet, and were successful; and I believe that lobsters and starch were almost the only things which obtained the slightest mercy in the Tariff. Now, on this subject I have a letter from an honest free-trader, and it is as follows:—

"I take the liberty of troubling you with a few particulars which I think will show to you the sort of disinterested reformers some of the leading members of the Anti-Corn-Law League are. You will please to satisfy yourself of the correctness of this statement before you make any public use of it."

I believe it to be perfectly correct.

"When Sir Robert Peel published his new Tariff, he put down starch at 5*l.* per cwt. duty from any foreign country—it before was 9*l.* something; no sooner did Mr. George Wilson (Chairman of the Council of the League) and a few others, leading men, hear of it, than they summoned a meeting of all the starchmakers in the kingdom to meet at Manchester, and Mr. George Wilson took the chair. Now, what do you think this meeting was for? You would suppose to take off the whole duty, as the whole population are consumers of the article. No such thing. Mr. G. Wilson, Mr. J. Rawsthorne, Mr. Halliday, and others were starch manufacturers; and although there are only about 200 of them, masters and men, yet the population of Great Britain and Ireland must be taxed for their individual interests, and not taxed at 5*l.* per cwt. (25 per cent. upon the cost of foreign starch), but they wanted the tax to be prohibitory, and actually succeeded in doubling the duty; they appointed a deputation from the meeting, consisting of Mr. John Rawsthorne, Mr. Halliday, and others, to wait upon the Board of Trade; these are self-styled disinterested reformers. You must not suppose that I am not for free trade: on the contrary; but I cannot join such free traders as these, and think every man of principle should show them up to public indignation."

Now in looking over the right hon. Baronet's new Tariff, though I find that there is to be free trade in corn, yet I find also that Mr. G. Wilson and starch are to be protected. Is this fair? This is the way in which the Government of the country truckle to the Anti-corn-Law League. I must allude now to a subject which is personal, and in alluding to it I must ask the indulgence of the House. I have suffered not a little from the conduct of an hon. Member of this House. I should perhaps never have referred to the subject again in this assembly, had not that hon. Member of whom I speak recently asserted, at a public meeting, held within a few miles of

my own house, that he meant to go down to the borough of Knaresborough with 1,500*l.* in his pocket, with that to deprive me of my seat. When, again, attending a meeting at Halifax, the same hon. Gentleman called on the Anti-Corn-Law League manufacturers to subscribe their money liberally, promising to them that, if they did so, the sums raised should be spent in the borough of Knaresborough, as it was high time that I should be removed. Now, as I am to be opposed to that hon. Gentleman or to some of his nominees, it will only be fair that, before we go further, we should stand on equal ground, and with that view I now take the liberty of introducing the matter. On March 15, 1842, I said in the House—

"The other night the hon. Member for Stockport said, he had inquired, whether in his mills, or 'printing works,' the truck system prevailed, and that he had found it did not; whereas the fact was, that the hon. Member himself kept cows, and forced his people to buy milk from him."

On the next night, the hon. Member for Stockport replied—

"As many hundred tons of dung were used in this trade, it was necessary for manufacturers to keep great numbers of cows. Now, it so happened that his printing work being close to a town, it was found more convenient to buy the requisite quantity of dung than to keep cows; and, therefore, the insinuations of the hon. Member for Knaresborough were not only untrue, but destitute of the shadow of a foundation."

When he made that statement I adopted the course usually pursued by Gentlemen in this House. I went into the library, wrote a letter to the hon. Member, and gave up the name of my informant; and he sent that letter down to the *Manchester Guardian*, and on the next day but one it was published to the world. I asked for a Committee of this House to enable me to prove the truth of the assertion I had made with regard to the truck system in the north of England, and that Committee was granted. The hon. Members for Stockport (Mr. Cobden), and Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), and others, whom it is unnecessary to mention, sat on it; it was fairly appointed, and Lord Ashley was in the chair. The hon. Member for Stockport had, on the 26th of March, made the House and the country believe that I had made a statement which was utterly untrue; he published that contradiction in every newspaper over which the Anti-Corn-Law League had influence; and what was the result of the inquiry? On the 13th of June, 1842, when the Committee sat in the presence of the two hon. Members I referred to, and of the noble chairman, Isaac Oldfield, clerk to the house of Stainton and Jones, of Chorley, solicitors, was called. In answer to a question from Lord Ashley, as to the manner in which Lord Atherton's Truck Act was evaded, he said—

"I think Mr. Cobden has not a shop attached to his works, neither do they let cottages. Mr. Cobden has no shop, but he is in the habit of letting out cows to his workpeople."

It would be imagined that hearing this the hon. Member for Stockport would ask this witness for his authority for such evidence; but instead of this, after several other answers had been given, the hon. Member put a question which was intended to draw only off the scent, and which was merely relative to the number of mills in Chorley. The hon. Member for Rochdale, also in the Committee, asked, in reference to letting out cows, "What was the nature of that transaction?" The answer was—

"I do not think that it is any injury to the workpeople, but it is done in Chorley. I made inquiries chiefly at Mr. Cobden's printworks: there are certain individuals who take cows. It is the interest of the printers to have cows kept upon certain land that they have, and several of the men take cows."

Then I put this question—

"Have you heard at any time of any manufacturers in your part of the country compelling the work-people to take more milk than they could consume?" The answer was, "Yes, I have." I asked "Is that carried on to a considerable extent?" and the reply was, "Yes, it is." "In Chorley?" "Yes." Mr. Cobden asked "Has that been the millowners or the calico printers?" The answer was, "The millowners, generally." I asked "Is the system considered by the working classes as oppressive?" The answer, "Yes, and it is particularly oppressive, and I state it as a fact, that the whole of the mill owners in Chorley, with the exception of one, in the cotton trade, are in the habit of getting something like 50 per cent. out of the shop." He also said, "They sell everything." Another question was, "That is the feeling among the working classes?" "Yes; milk has been taken for a family, and actually sold at less than they gave for it to another family to get quit of it."

Now I will not (continued the hon. Member) say another word on this question. I appeal to the gentlemanly feeling of this House for my justification. It is late in doing so, I admit; but my conscience has always acquitted me; and I was unwilling to rake up any unpleasant discussion. I knew I was speaking the truth; and I now call upon the House to decide which of the two Members it was, the hon. Member for Stockport or myself, who made a statement without a shadow of foundation. I am

prepared to meet that hon. Member on his own ground or on mine. He may go down to Knaresborough, and spend his 1,500*l.*; but I have far too high an opinion of my constituents to believe that he can be successful, or that the Association which he represents would be countenanced. I thank the House for the indulgence with which, this evening, I have been heard. I have felt it my duty to redeem every pledge I have given to my constituents. I am prepared to go before them; I challenge you to do the same.

Dr. BOWRING moved the Adjournment of the Debate to Wednesday.

Mr. M. MILES begged upon that to move an Amendment, that the debate be adjourned to Thursday evening. He did not think that it would make the slightest eventual difference, and he was of opinion that the business for which, as he understood, Wednesdays had been set apart, should not be interfered with. If his wish had been consulted, a division would long since have been come to; but on a question of such importance, one, as all agitating the country, east, west, north, and south, it would have been impracticable, and perhaps inadvisable, to close the debate before this week. It had certainly already been sufficiently discussed, as far as that side of the House was concerned; and there would therefore, be no objection to an adjournment to Thursday. He sincerely hoped the discussion would not be continued over Friday night. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had that day presented a petition from Liverpool, containing a prayer to that effect, from merchants engaged in the American trade, and also representing the great impediments which the delay in a settlement presented to mercantile business. That might be looked upon as the general feeling on the subject; and the sooner a settlement was effected the better for Ireland. If, in reference to that country, the right hon. Baronet introduced a short Bill, the object of which should be to give an immediate supply of food, his (Mr. Miles's) consent should be cheerfully given to its passing. If famine, while the debate was going on, did come on the Irish people, and if the price of provisions did rise, upon the right hon. Baronet would rest all the responsibility.

Debate adjourned to Thursday.

House adjourned at a quarter to One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 25, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—2°· Friendly Societies.

Petitions Presented. By Sir Robert Harry Inglis, from Members of the Bath Church of England Lay Association, against the Union of Saint Asaph and Bangor Dioceses.—By Mr. Hale, from Landowners, Tenant Farmers, and others, of the Parishes of Dodington, Wapley, and Codrington, and by Mr. Buck, from Landowners, Farmers, and Labourers, of the Parish of Bradford, against the proposed Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Inhabitants of the Borough of Rochdale, for Remission of Sentence upon William S. Ellis.—By several hon. Members, from various places, in favour of Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Inhabitants of the Borough of Rochdale, and by Captain Pechell, from Brighton, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Renton, West Linton, Kilmarnock, Tavistock, and St. Boswells, and by General Morison, from Coalsnaughton, against Enrolment of Militia.

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

On the Motion that the Orders of the Day be read,

Mr. A. S. O'BRIEN said, that so much anxiety existed out of doors in consequence of proceedings of a very extraordinary nature, as he must characterize them, which had taken place at the late South Nottinghamshire election, that he felt bound to take the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the House to them. According to the accounts of the newspapers it appeared that the hon. Member for Malton, in addressing the electors of South Nottinghamshire from the hustings, stated—

"That when Lord Lincoln wrote to ask for his support, he had answered, that if Lord Lincoln had come in his old office to ask for re-election on the ground of the Corn Laws, he had made up his mind, though not entirely agreeing with the Government measure, to give him without a reservation, and without a word, his cordial support. But as Lord Lincoln came in the new and responsible office of Secretary for Ireland, entertaining strong opinions, which he did, on certain points of policy, both as regarded Church and State affairs in Ireland, he could not offer the noble Lord an entire and cordial support without some explanation, in the first instance, as to the views with which he entered on that office. He had had a conversation with the noble Lord on Irish affairs, with which he was entirely satisfied; and, convinced that the noble Lord would enter on those high duties in a spirit of firm and liberal policy, he at once assured him of his cordial good wishes and earnest support."

The views, therefore, of the noble Lord were perfectly satisfactory to the hon. Member for Malton, who stated that he entertained very strong opinions on the subject, the nature of which might be gathered from the support given by the hon. Member to the Motion of the hon. Member

for Sheffield, for the destruction of the Irish Establishment. The Earl of Lincoln subsequently, in one part of his speech, mentioned that, although his opinions on the subject of the Corn Laws had changed, he had still remained on the Government benches; but that although his position in the Ministry would have entitled him to speak on the Corn Law debates, which had taken place on former occasions in that House, yet his convictions as to the necessity of abolishing protection altogether were so strong that he refrained from taking part in those debates. Taking these two circumstances into consideration, namely—the declaration of the hon. Member for Malton, that he was perfectly satisfied with the views of the noble Lord in reference to Ireland, and the declaration of the noble Lord himself that he considered it proper and right to remain a member of a protection Government, entertaining sentiments hostile to protection, satisfying his conscience by taking no part in the Corn Law debates—he felt called upon to tell the Government that the greatest consternation existed in the minds of the people as to the opinions of the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, on the subject of the Irish Church; and he must take this opportunity of repeating publicly in his place in Parliament what he had stated at Northampton yesterday, namely—that he deeply regretted that a person for whom he entertained so sincere a regard should have uttered such sentiments as that he considered it right to maintain silence upon a subject respecting which his opinions were directly opposed to the professions of the Government to which he belonged. If the Irish Church was to be destroyed, and its revenues confiscated, he should most sincerely prefer that the noble Lord the Member for the city of London should have the task rather than the Members of Her Majesty's Government. It was not his intention to ask any question of Her Majesty's Government; it remained for them to decide whether they chose to make any comments. He had always said, if you turn out the Government you will have the noble Lord the Member for the city of London in power, and then what will become of the Irish Church? But if the sentiments of the Earl of Lincoln, so satisfactory to the hon. Member for Malton, who was distinctly pledged to the destruction of the temporalities of the Irish Church, were the sentiments of the Government of which he formed a part, however much they might have heard of common honesty and public faith, he did not think he was transgressing his duty us the Representative for Northamptonshire, and a Member of that House, in earnestly requesting the Members of the Government, as speedily as possible, to declare their views.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that had it not been for the declaration made by the hon. Member at the close of his speech, he certainly should have felt some surprise at the hon. Member putting a question to him without having the courtesy to give him notice. It was quite possible that in the course of a few days the Earl of Lincoln might be in the House to answer any question which the hon. Member might think proper to put to him with respect to his conduct in reference to the Corn Laws; and he trusted that the noble Earl, in his seat in Parliament, would be able to explain his conduct on that subject fully and satisfactorily, both to the hon. Member and to the House. The hon. Member had referred to a conversation which was said to have taken place between the Earl of Lincoln and a Member of that House, during the Northamptonshire election, on the subject of Irish policy. With regard to that conversation he (Sir J. Graham) had no more information than the hon. Member himself, or any other Member of that House. He had had no opportunity of conferring with the noble Lord, and had received no explanation from him in reference to that conversation. As he read the report in the newspapers, the hon. Member for Malton declared that the communication which took place between himself and the noble Lord was satisfactory to the hon. Member. He did not know what the opinions of the hon. Member for Malton were with respect to Irish policy; they might be satisfactory to him and to Her Majesty's Ministers. On the other hand, the hon. Member for Malton might entertain opinions with which he could not concur. The hon. Member said he had much rather see the destruction of the Irish Church intrusted to the noble Lord opposite than to Her Majesty's present Government. He was not aware that the noble Lord was at all prepared to destroy that Church; at all events, he had never heard him make any such declaration. He had differed from the noble Lord as to the appropriation of a portion of revenue of the Irish Church; but it remained to be shown that the noble Lord was prepared, either

in or out of office, to support a measure having for its object the destruction of that establishment. Certainly he was not in a condition to state the substance of the conversation which had been so vaguely rumoured abroad. As far as he was aware of the sentiments of his noble Friend with respect to Irish policy, it was in unison with those of his own; and those sentiments were decidedly opposed to any policy destructive of the Protestant Church in Ireland.

Lord J. RUSSELL said, as the hon. Member for Malton was not present, and as the hon. Member for Northamptonshire had moreover, in his strictures upon the conduct of the Earl of Lincoln, referred to sentiments entertained by him (Lord J. Russell), he thought it due as well to his hon. Friend as to his own public character, to make a short statement to the House. His hon. Friend the Member for Malton had communicated to him generally all that passed between him and the Earl of Lincoln on the occasion alluded to. He was not authorised to make any statement on the subject; but in justice to the Earl of Lincoln he felt bound to state that nothing which the noble Lord stated to his hon. Friend the Member for Malton implied any opinion that he was prepared to assist in the destruction of the Protestant Church in Ireland. Indeed, he believed his hon. Friend said little more than this—that he was for a firm and liberal policy as regarded the affairs of Ireland; that with regard to the particular measures in reference to that country he coincided with his Colleagues in the Cabinet in the course which they had hitherto pursued; to the future measures which it might be advisable to take he would prefer postponing an opinion until he had held the office of Secretary for Ireland some time longer. Those opinions, in his (Lord J. Russell's) opinion, were perfectly honourable to the noble Lord: whether they were satisfactory to the hon. Member for Malton was entirely a matter for the consideration of that hon. Member. It was to be considered likewise that the hon. Member for Malton had been long connected by ties of friendship with the Earl of Lincoln; that he entertained the highest respect for his character; and that it was that very respect which induced the hon. Member to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the noble Lord's views with reference to Ireland, in order to see whether the policy was likely to be such as he should be able to support. He did not think that anything had passed in that conversation, as the information had reached him, at all inconsistent with the previous conduct of the Earl of Lincoln in reference to the Irish Church. With regard to himself he must decline the task which the hon. Member for Northamptonshire proposed to impose on him, of framing measures for the destruction of the Church of Ireland. He had never held the opinion that the Irish Church ought to be destroyed. He thought that a portion of its revenues were misapplied, and ought to be otherwise applied; but it was a matter of controversy between hon. Gentlemen opposite and himself what would be the tendency of such a measure—they contending that it would end in the destruction of the Irish Church; and he maintaining that it was calculated to preserve it. For his own part he was ready to declare that, although he could never think the present situation of the Irish Church endowment, as it stood with regard to particular parishes, satisfactory, yet with regard to that Church as a whole, he wished for its maintenance and support, and he trusted that Parliament would maintain and support that part of the United Church of England and Ireland. He, therefore, could not accept the duty which the hon. Member seemed to think should devolve on him. He would not disguise, however, that although he thought it would be inexpedient to introduce any measure with respect to the Irish Church at present, yet that when the time should come for the consideration of that question, there were parts of that Church which might be usefully and beneficially reformed, which would make that Church better able to withstand future attacks. He begged pardon of the House for thus entering into the subject, but he thought the explanation necessary, in order to correct unjust representations, which might otherwise have gone forth to the prejudice of the Earl of Lincoln.

Sir R. INGLIS thought the House greatly indebted to the hon. Member for Northampton for calling their attention to the conversation to which he had alluded, and sincerely wished the noble Lord the Member for the city of London had confined himself to the cordial cheer with which he greeted the statement of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, respecting his views as to the destruction of the Irish Church.

Mr. O'CONNELL had been extremely

gratified at that part of the speech of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire in which he drew the clear distinction—a distinction never to be forgotten—between the Established Church of Ireland and its temporalities. The distinction was emphatic, and should not be lost sight of: for he knew no one who desired the destruction of that Church, unless by the conversion of its members to the precepts of a purer faith. The Protestants of Ireland had as much right, he contended, to maintain their Church in Ireland as the Roman Catholics had to maintain theirs, which they did by their own exertions: would that the Protestant Church were on the same footing! But the temporalities were another affair. He could not allow that they formed any part of the Irish Church, and he begged to press on the House the consideration of their allocation. Let them remember the debt which they owned to Ireland after so many centuries of misrule, which had ruined the country; he wanted no other authority for this assertion than the Report of the Earl of Devon's Commission. They could never take the affairs of the Irish Church into consideration without making some better allocation of its temporalities. He wished to deprive no man of his vested rights, but would have him retain them for life; but he could not hold out the least hope to those who desired an amalgamation of the two countries, unless some very strong and decisive measure were taken in reference to the temporalities of the Irish Church.

Mr. PHILIP HOWARD complained of those Gentlemen who had lately on the hustings at public meetings indulged in epithets towards their Catholic fellow subjects, calculated to embitter the feelings which existed between Catholics and Protestants, and to fan the almost extinct flame of religious discord. For his own part, he thought Gentlemen as much bound to be cautious in their expressions on the hustings as in the drawing-room. He could not conceive why these Gentlemen should think fit to describe those as Papists, and their religion as Popery, who, in the Votes which he held in his hand, were called Roman Catholics. If such were the conduct of Gentlemen of education, and who professed to represent the aristocracy of the country, what was to be expected from the ignorant and the low? Protectionists or anti-protectionists, it was by courtesy and argument—not by vituperation and invective—that men would recommend themselves to the good feeling and honourable regard of their fellow-countrymen.

THE CONVICT SEERY.

Sir J. GRAHAM was anxious to take the earliest opportunity of explaining the answer given by him to the hon. and learned Member for Cork on Monday last. The House would remember that the hon. and learned Member, on Thursday, gave notice of two questions which he intended to ask him (Sir. J. Graham). He did not happen to see the precise terms of those questions, and had no opportunity of writing to the Lord Lieutenant till Friday evening; and, therefore, answered the questions on Monday before he had received the Lord Lieutenant's answer. The first question related to a deputation which was said to have waited on the Lord Lieutenant respecting the case of Bryan Seery. The hon. and learned Gentleman asked him whether it was true that a deputation had waited on the Lord Lieutenant on this subject, and had prayed that the sentence of death passed on that individual should be carried into effect. He had answered the hon. and learned Member's question on the best information which he could obtain before receiving the answer of the Lord Lieutenant; and had stated that a deputation from the county of Westmeath had made such a representation, and that he deeply deplored it, as being, in his opinion, harsh and unusual. He held in his hand the answer of the Lord Lieutenant, received on Monday morning. It was as follows:—

"Dublin Castle, Feb. 22, 1846.

"My dear Sir James—You may very safely affirm that the language of the deputation that waited upon me had not the slightest influence on my mind, nor swayed my judgment in the least in deciding upon the case of Seery; nor did I give the least encouragement or countenance to such interference.

"But, in point of fact, the principal object of the deputation was to represent to me the lawless state of the county of Roscommon, and the necessitp of more stringent measures for its pacification; and it was only incidentally stated that any lenity shown to Seery would be considered as a proof of the weakness of the Government, and tend to encourage the perpetration of such atrocities, and to keep alive that sanguinary spirit so fatal to the peace of the country."

The only inaccuracy in the statement which he (Sir J. Graham) had made, consisted in saying, that the deputation came from Westmeath instead of Roscommon.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE moved the Second

Reading of the Friendly Societies Bill. The House was aware, that in the year 1829, an Act was passed to consolidate the Friendly Societies Act. In 1834, 4th and 5th William IV., another Act was passed to extend the objects of the former Statute, which had worked remarkably well until within a short period since. The object of the Bill was to remove doubts which had arisen in consequence of a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench upon an appeal in a case connected with the South Shields Loan Investment Society. A dispute had arisen between that society and one of its members named John Scott, who had allowed his contributions to fall in arrear. He was summoned before the magistrates, who refused to interfere; a *mandamus* was obtained from the Court of Queen's Bench, and the question to be argued was raised by doubts which existed as to the interpretation and construction of the Act; of which doubts, Scott, for the purpose of avoiding the payment of his contributions, had taken advantage. The case came on before Mr. Justice Wightman. It was shown that the society was established on the 7th of December, 1841, and that its rules had been duly certified by Mr. Tidd Pratt, shortly after which this dispute arose. The case was ably argued, and the decision of Mr. Justice Wightman, as reported in the *Legal Observer*, was as follows:—

"I am of opinion that this society is not a friendly society, and that the words 'or any other purpose not illegal,' in the second section of the 4th and 5th William IV., c. 40, must be construed so as to bear some relation to the declared objects of the Act—namely, for the mutual relief and maintenance of all and every the members thereof, their wives, children, &c., in sickness, infancy, advanced age, widowhood, or any other natural state or contingency whereof the occurence is susceptible of calculation by way of average. If these words were to receive a more extended construction, they would then include societies which it is not contended fall within the Act, namely, for insurance on lives, and numerous others. But there is an additional circumstance which leads me to this conclusion, which is, that the Legislature has passed distinct Acts for the regulation of loan societies, and I cannot make any real distinction between the societies framed under the 5th and 6th William IV., c. 23, and the present. That Act does not expressly provide for the case of loans to the members themselves; but I see nothing to exclude such a case from its operation, or to prevent rules from being framed to meet it. However that may be, at all events this does not appear to me to be a friendly society, and consequently the present rule must be discharged."

It certainly would be very unbecoming in him to impugn the correctness of Mr. Justice Wightman's views; but he thought it full time that some decision should be come to in reference to the numerous societies of the same nature which were now in existence, and that the learned Judge could not have been acquainted with their importance in the country. At that very moment there were not less than 5,000 societies, possessing capital from 50,000*l.* up to 70,000*l.*, founded for the mutual relief of the members, their wives and families, in sickness and advanced age, and other contingencies. The greatest consternation would be caused by that decision among the numerous persons connected with those bodies. In the event of any disputes, the magistrate would refuse to interfere, and the case would then be brought into the Court of Queen's Bench, where expense and delay would waste the funds of the society; or the trustees might run off with all the money in the interval, and nothing but confusion and actual robbery could ensue from such a construction of the Act of Parliament. The question was no crotchet of his—it was no business of his; but in consequence of that decision, Mr. Tidd Pratt was obliged to hold his hands, and could not enrol parties who were perpetually applying to him; and it was with the sanction of that gentleman that he (Mr. Duncombe) brought the matter before the House. The decision in effect was, that no societies could be enrolled or entitled to the benefit of the Act, except those "*ejusdem generis*," with the object of mutual benefit to the members. He believed that those friendly and loan societies were of the greatest advantage to the poorer classes, and that the more their sphere could be extended, and the less the members were put to expense in having their rules and regulations certified, the better would it be for the country. The only alteration he sought to effect in the Bill was, after the words "or for any purpose which is not illegal," to add, "whether of the same description as is hereinafter mentioned, or otherwise."

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that no person could be more favourably disposed towards friendly and mutual benefit societies than he was; or be more willing to promote their extension. However, as he had not had any opportunity of conferring with Mr. Tidd Pratt on the subject, he thought it would not be proper to enter at once into the views of the hon. Member. There were considerable difficulties in the alterations he proposed. Any one looking to the Bill

would see that its whole purpose was contained in the words "and otherwise." The preamble contained the whole force of the law, which was applicable to mutual insurance and friendly societies, *ejusdem generis*, as the purposes specified, with objects legal in themselves, and of the same kind. By the insertion of the words "and otherwise," the privileges of friendly insurances and mutual societies would be extended to societies for promoting or carrying out all objects of every kind. What would be the effect of that extension? There were many objects, not illegal in themselves, which it might not be the policy of the State to encourage. Friendly societies, as at present constituted, had a great many advantages. They could make by-laws which might be enforced in the most stringent manner, and had numerous facilities in the advantageous employment of their capital. It would be well to pause before those advantages were universally extended. For instance, he was not prepared to say that a combination of masters to reduce the rate of wages, or of workmen to raise them by legal means, was illegal, and might be inexpedient; but if workmen were to enter into friendly and mutual benefit societies to maintain themselves during a strike, though it might not be illegal in itself, he nevertheless doubted whether it would be the policy of the State to extend the advantages of those societies to men engaged in any such object. The words sought to be introduced, however, would have the effect of sanctioning their enrolment. He was not prepared to deny, that all objects, *ejusdem generis*, should be brought under the general Act; but the words in question would extend the present application of the law to societies of any kind. He could not understand that any societies for political purposes, though not illegal in themselves, should be brought under the provisions of the Act. Reserving to Government the full right of opposing the introduction of those words on a future occasion, he would, with that protest, consent to the second reading of the Bill. The hon. Member had stated his objects with candour and clearness, and he thought it right to be equally explicit in stating the course which he would be prepared to take in reference to the Bill before the House.

Mr. HENLEY was extremely favourable to friendly societies; he believed they were of great value to the class of people who made use of them; but he feared the adoption of a measure so vague in general as the one now proposed would endanger the operations of a system which had hitherto worked so well. As the right hon. Baronet had justly stated, it might be applied to purposes extremely inconvenient. The House ought to bear in mind too the great privileges which friendly societies presented in regard to the depositing of their money in savings banks; and if care was not taken the country might be subjected to great convenience by extending this privilege to societies instituted for improper purposes. There was one matter, however, connected with friendly societies which had come under his own knowledge, which he wished to state to the House; he meant the power of carrying actions against friendly societies into the Court of Chancery, which he feared might become a great abuse. In the county with which he was connected (Oxfordshire), a dispute similar to the one referred to by the hon. Member (Mr. Duncombe) arose in a friendly society, which was taken hold of by a professional man, who raised a Chancery suit against the whole members of the society; and he understood that the latter had consented to pay the costs, amounting to a considerable amount of money, rather than allow the action to go on, because they were afraid that the proceedings might be so protracted as to swallow up the whole of their funds. He (Mr. Henley) did not know whether any means could be adopted to improve the law in this respect; but he thought the point well worthy of consideration.

Mr. DUNCOMBE assured the House, that as the object of the Act 4th and 5th William IV. was understoood to extend the operations of friendly societies to all purposes not illegal, and as a construction had been put upon that Act at variance with this object, he only wished, by the present measure, to carry out the intentions of the original framers of that measure. The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) had expressed his fears of political objects coming under the operation of this measure. He could only say that he had introduced the measure for no political purpose whatever; but, after all, political societies were not illegal, and he did not see any harm would be done, even if they were to come under its operation. Since he had brought in this Bill he had been overwhelmed with letters complaining of its defects, and asking him to introduce all sorts of amendments, but which he had declined to do, because it would require a new Act of Parliament to

meet the wishes of all the people who had addressed him. He intended merely to confine himself to extending the operations of friendly societies to the objects originally intended by the last alteration of the law. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would take an early opportunity of seeing Mr. Tidd Pratt, who would explain the matter much better than he (Mr. Duncombe) could do, and who could assure him that there was no such danger to be apprehended from the measure as he seemed to think.

Mr. J. S. WORTLEY said, that Mr. Duncombe had misconceived the intention of the Act 4 and 5 William IV.; for, so far as the object being as he had stated, in 1834, when the Act was passed, an Amendment by Mr. Bernal, the Member for Weymouth, that it should be extended to other purposes than those *ejusdem generis* which were specified in the Bill, was proposed in Committee and rejected, on the ground that it might be abused. With reference to Mr. Justice Wightman's decision, he had not seen any authorized report of it; and he believed that great misconception often arose from trusting to those ephemeral reports which appeared in the weekly law journals. But if any doubt had arisen as to whether societies for the mutual insurance of lives came within the meaning of the Act, the simplest way would be to introduce a Declaratory Act, removing the doubt; but he thought it most desirable that these societies should be preserved from the contamination of political or religious objects.

Mr. HAWES urged on the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham) the necessity of giving this Bill, at the earliest period, his best consideration; he also suggested whether or not the Bill ought to have a retrospective effect, so as to cover all those societies which might be registered now, but whose legality was rendered doubtful by the recent decision.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that if the hon. Member (Mr. Duncombe) would put the Bill for Committee on Wednesday next, he (Sir J. Graham) would take the opportunity before that time of seeing Mr. Tidd Pratt, of conferring with the law officers of the Crown, and considering the effect of Mr. Justice Wightman's judgment. He would also confer with the hon. Member himself before Wednesday, and point out what alterations he wished in the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 26, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—2ª. County Works Presentments (Ireland); Drainage, &c. (Ireland).

Reported.—Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. From Ministers, Churchwardens, and others, in the Parish of Witbourne, against the Union of the Sees of St. Asaph and Bangor, but in favour of the Appointment of a Bishop to the See of Manchester.—By Lord Somers, from Hereford, for the Reduction of the Duties on Tea and Sugar.—From the Presbytery of Elgin, against the present practice of granting Spirit Licenses to Keepers of Toll Houses in Scotland.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Landowners, Tenants, Labourers, and others, of Ackbrook, and several other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest.—From Landowners, Occupiers, and Tradesmen, of North Walsham, in favour of the Corn Laws.—From Farmers of Buttevant, against the Measure relating to Customs and Corn Importation.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Inhabitants of Nuneaton, against the Measure proposing to reduce the Amount of Protection on Ribbon Manufacture.

THE RECENT OPERATIONS IN INDIA.

The Earl of RIPON having laid certain Papers on the Table of the House,

The Duke of RICHMOND rose, and said that he, for one, could entertain no other feeling than that of the deepest gratitude for the bravery and gallantry displayed by the British troops in the recent battles in India. He wished, however, to ask his noble Friend whether he was prepared to lay upon the Table any Papers which would show whether or not it was the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that hereafter a Governor General of India should accept a secondary office in the Indian army? He did not mean to cast any censure on Sir Henry Hardinge, who, as an old soldier, might naturally have wished to place himself in the thick of the fight; but he objected to a divided command of the army; and he thought that if Governors General were to accept secondary commands, that division of authority might some time or another become extremely prejudicial to the interests of the British Empire and the glory of our arms.

The Earl of RIPON said, that there could be no doubt that great inconvenience might arise from such a division of authority. Her Majesty's Government had not been aware of the arrangement until they had recently received a notification with respect to it from India. He could assure his noble Friend that the attention of Her Majesty's Government had been directed to the subject.

CASE OF BRYAN SEERY.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH said he wished to put a question to the noble Earl near him (the Earl of St. Germans)

upon a subject to which he had referred the other evening. He was sorry that he had been interrupted upon that occasion, because as the matter regarded the feelings of individuals, he should have been much better pleased that it had been at once disposed of. He wished to ask, in the first place, whether any deputation had proceeded to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, from the county of Westmeath, upon the subject of the conviction of Bryan Seery, who had been left for execution in that county; and he wished to ask, in the second place, whether if there had been such a deputation, their proceeding ought to be deemed "harsh and unusual." Now it might be that such a proceeding would be harsh and unusual in England; but it did not follow that what would be improper in this country would necessarily be improper in Ireland. He would remind their Lordships that at the time at which the deputation was alleged to have proceeded to the Lord Lieutenant a portion of the Irish people were in a state of great excitement; that all the individuals concerned in bringing Seery to justice had been assailed; and that a tone of great violence had been adopted by a certain portion of the press against the Government itself, while it was deliberating on the course it should take on the occasion. If, under such circumstances, any deputation had proceeded to the Lord Lieutenant, it would be but fair to bear in mind what were the feelings under which they might be supposed to have acted. All those proceedings had arisen out of the ribbon conspiracy; and that was a brigandage—a conspiracy, including almost all the youthful population of Ireland; all the population between sixteen and twenty-five, or, perhaps, a greater age; or, at least, all those who had not escaped the coercion put upon those young persons who might otherwise not have joined in so bloody a conspiracy. It was possible that in such a state of affairs individuals might have gone to the Lord Lieutenant, and might, without any just blame, have adopted such a course in the midst of the great excitement which prevailed, after the jury had been assailed in the newspapers, after the complaints made of the manner in which the commission was said to have been got up, and after the whole judicial body of the country had been placarded as having sacrificed an innocent man. And it would, in his (the Marquess of Westmeath's) opinion, be a most unfortunate thing that any Minister of the Crown should have designated the proceeding in question as "harsh and unusual;" because their Lordships should know that there were in Ireland persons ready to seize upon any circumstance whatever for the purpose of holding up individuals to odium, and of misrepresenting their conduct. In order to show how justifiable might be the proceeding to which he had been referring, he would state to their Lordships what had been the conduct of the Roman Catholic clergy upon that subject. Long before the commission had gone down, the Romish bishop of the diocese had given out from his altar that Seery was innocent, in those emphatic terms, and in that kind of announcement, which were very well understood in that country by many of the laity, who dared not give their opinion as to whether such observations ought to be made. A letter of a most indecent kind had been published, with the name of the Romish bishop attached to it. It condemned the whole course of the Crown counsel and of the Government; it bore hard upon the jury, and it made the poor people of that country believe that that unfortunate man had been sacrificed, and that he was in reality innocent. Even when it appeared that the Government were determined to let the law take its course, he gave out in his chapel that no person ought to come in to witness the execution, and that he should take care there would be persons on the roads to watch and see who would come in. Now those were circumstances which could take place in no country but in Ireland; and he deeply and heartily and profoundly regretted to know that they were not unusual in that country. He would take that opportunity of telling Her Majesty's Ministers, that, before they brought forward any measures of concession for Ireland, they ought to restore tranquillity there, and the supremacy of the law, and convince the people that the country was to be ruled by the Government and by Her Majesty, and not by threats, not by menaces, not by bullyings, and not by insinuations of the Roman Catholic clergy. Such interference on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy as that of which he had given an instance, powerfully contributed to make the law odious. With these observations, he would conclude by putting to the noble Earl the Postmaster General the following questions of which he had given notice :—"Whether a deputation, consisting of several persons, waited upon His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, after the conviction, and

before the execution of Bryan Seery, to pray that the convict should not be respited, or his sentence transmuted, but that he should be executed? 2ndly. Whether that deputation purported to proceed from the county of Westmeath? 3rdly. Whether such proceeding is to be deemed 'harsh and unusual?'"

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, it was not his intention on that evening to go into a discussion on the general state of Ireland. But before he proceeded to answer the questions put to him on the present occasion, he should enter his protest against the assertion of the noble Marquess relative to the youth of Ireland, and also against his assertion with regard to the Roman Catholic clergy. He (the Earl of St. Germans) could say with regard to the Roman Catholic clergy, as a body, that he knew many of them who were men eminent for their piety, their charity, and their attention to all the duties of life. With respect to the first part of the question put to him by the noble Marquess, he would only read to the House an extract from a letter from his noble Friend the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, but without naming any parties therein mentioned. It was this:—

"Whatever may have been the language used by the deputation that waited upon me, it had not the slightest influence on my mind, nor swayed my judgment in the least, in deciding upon the case of Seery; nor did I give the least encouragement nor countenance to such interference. But in point of fact the principal object of the deputation was to represent to me the lawless state of the county of Roscommon, and the necessity of some stringent measures for its pacification; and it was only incidentally stated that any lenity shown to Seery would be considered as a proof of the weakness of the Government, and tend to encourage the perpetration of such atrocities, and to keep alive that sanguinary spirit so fatal to the peace of the country."

With regard to the noble Marquess's next question, he could only say that he was perfectly certain the eminent individuals who formed the deputation referred to were actuated only by a strong sense of duty, and a conscientious feeling, in making the representations which they did to the Government in Ireland; but at the same time he could not but affirm that the course here pursued was altogether an unusual one, and he knew of no precedent for it either in Ireland or in England at any former period. He would not like to charge an act done conscientiously as a harsh one; but he had no hesitation in saying that the proceeding was an unusual one. His noble Friend the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had not come to the conclusion at which he arrived with respect to the case alluded to, without the most anxious and deliberate consideration.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH explained that what he had said with regard to the youth of Ireland only referred to those who were under the iron rule of the ribbon conspiracy.

LORD STOURTON was understood to defend the Roman Catholic clergy generally, as being individuals who had exerted themselves much to preserve the peace of the country, procure safety to life and property, and contribute to the proper administration of justice. He thought also that it should not for a moment be supposed that a Roman Catholic juror would be influenced by his bishop or clergy to take any course at variance with his oath.

LORD BROUGHAM would ever most strongly deprecate, as highly injurious to the proper administration of the law, any discussions concerning the different religious beliefs of judges, of jurors, or of prisoners. Such mixing up of questions of religion did not, in his opinion, do any service to the sacred cause of justice. He was happy to hear from the noble Lord who had just spoken that the Roman Catholic priests were the best friends of the people of Ireland, and the promoters of the administration of the laws; but if they were so, he should like to see them at once give up that abominable practice of addressing political lectures in their chapels. It was a most reprehensible desecration of the altar of their faith, to deliver political sermons from them. As to the administration of justice being interfered with by any priest—be he Protestant or be he Roman Catholic—he did not believe it; and if any man did it, the law would know how to deal with him, and not leave him for any panegyric of any noble Lord. But it would be for the judge, who would not discharge his duty, if, when a case was made out before him, he did not punish such persons for contempt.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH and Lord STOURTON explained.

Subject at an end.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 26, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW WRIT. For Bridport, *v.* Alexander Ross Wishart Baillie Cochrane, Esq., Chiltern Hundreds.

NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Northampton County (Southern Division), Richard Henry Richard Howard Vyse, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2).
2°. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By several hon. Members, from an immense number of places, against any Diminution of the Protection hitherto granted to Agriculture.—By Mr. Parker, from Master, Warden, Searchers, Assistants, and Commonalty of the Corporation of Cutlers, of Sheffield, for Repeal of Duty on Copper.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against the proposed Measures respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By several hon. Members, from a great number of places, for a Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Mark Philips, from Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, of Manchester, for a speedy Adjustment of the Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Martha Eliza Rhoda Shuttleworth, complaining of Delay in respect to the Property Tax.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Shipowners resident in the Borough of Tynemouth, for a Reduction of Duty on Timber.—By Mr. Jervis, from Governors and Directors of the Poor of the Parishes of Saint Margaret and Saint John's, Westminster, against Institution of Night Asylums for the Poor.—By several hon. Members, from an immense number of places, in favour of a Ten Hours' (Factory) Bill.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Inhabitants of Dundee, for Inquiry into Ill-treatment of Girls in Factories.—By Captain Pechell, from Brighton, and by Mr. Roebuck, from Thomas Balwell and others, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Roebuck, from Archibald White, for enforcing compliance with Joint Stock Companies Act.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against Enrolment of the Militia.—By Mr. Edward Ellice, from Magistrates and Council of the Royal Burgh of Pittenween, for Alteration in the Prisons (Scotland) Act.

MR. FERRAND'S SPEECH.

On the question that the Order of the Day be read.

MR. ROEBUCK, before the Order of the Day was read, wished that they could come to some understanding as to the time when this prolonged debate was likely to end. The reason why he asked this question was, that it appeared to him the debate had taken a turn by which it seemed there was a disposition among a certain party to waste the time of the House, rather than to improve it. It had been his unfortunate fate, with that of a great many other hon. Members, to be obliged to listen on Tuesday night to a Gentleman who, for a period of two hours and a half, had occupied the valuable time of the House in speaking upon a variety of topics that were relevant to any other subject than that upon which they were debating. He had heard the hon. Gentleman speak on that occasion in a manner that did not confer honour on that House, nor promote its character for decency or order, or add to its great commanding dignity, for the period of two hours and and a half—two mortal hours and a half by the clock. He was at a loss to understand how the hon. Gentlemen opposite could fancy that they were deriving an advantage to their cause by enlisting this hon. Gentleman in their ranks, and obtaining his great assistance in the vociferations with which he dealt out his numerous assertions. He was sure that if the House wished to maintain their dignity and to command respect, they could not effect either object by encouraging this vocabulary of vituperations, those indecent menaces, or such violent language in that House. The hon. Member came forward like Orson, as it were, with a club in his hand, to beat down all those opinions to which he was opposed, by the most violent language—by furious, out-spoken, unmeaning ——; there were words so aptly expressive of his (Mr. Roebuck's) opinions in respect to such conduct, but out of regard to this House he did not like to employ them. ["Oh, oh!"] In describing the hon. Gentleman's manner, he felt that he was driven to some periphrasis, which perhaps would be less expressive than decent. The difficulty was not created by him (Mr. Roebuck), but by that hon. Member who violated all decency in that House in the language which he used. ["Order, order!"] Oh, they cried out "Order" now, but did they cry out "Order" when these violent statements were being made by the hon. Gentleman? ["Hear, hear."] No, that was just what he complained of. There was a party opposite who were so hard put to it, that in place of argument they were content to rest their cause upon the violent, outspreading, swaggering, blustering, unmeaning abuse of one hon. Member. If they were obliged to consume another night in this discussion, he hoped that they would have something to occupy their attention beyond the manifestations of that unextinguishable hatred and those intense exhibitions of passion which characterized the speeches of the hon. Gentleman to whom he was referring. The hon. Member had almost the whole of that period of two hours and a half occupied the time of the House by reading the former opinions of hon. Members who sat upon his own side of the House; and their conduct he designated as dishonourable, because they did not do what he thought that they ought to do. What was the worth of that hon. Member's opinions? He would measure it by the test that was adopted in his own profession. He would then ask, was there a human being who would give the Gentleman one guinea, or a half a guinea, or a crown—ay, or even half a farthing, for any opinion that he could express in respect to the conduct of another? He had heard it stated,

before the hon. Gentleman had addressed the House, that he was coming down to speak, and that he was to occupy three hours of the time of the House; that he was about to make a speech which would prevent any of the League Members giving a vote in favour of the measure before the House. Now he was free to acknowledge, for the honour of the House, that there were men of great ability to be found amongst the agricultural Members opposite. He acknowledged that he had been delighted at the varied talents that had been displayed by the supporters of that interest during this debate; but at the same time he must be allowed to say that it was not by such exhibitions as this that the character of that party was to be raised, nor was their cause to be supported by any such unmeaning violence as they had witnessed. If that cause were good, or of any value, it was not to be sustained by such expressions as had been used. He hoped, for their honour and credit, that they would get something better to exhibit in the shape of argument than what they were obliged to listen to on the last night of the debate. He had no personal feeling against the hon. Gentleman; but he was too long accustomed to the atmosphere of that House to be afraid of meeting as they deserved any such expressions as had been made use of by the hon. Gentleman to whom he was alluding. He trusted that that party would not be driven to such straits as to hope for support in their opposition to any measure from such an advocate as had started up on the last night. If they were to decide upon the merits of this question, let them have some argument to influence them in their decision; and he hoped that before the debate closed the party opposite would furnish them with something like argument and reason, and not waste their time in exhibitions such as this, or in hearing vulgar hatred expressed in violent vulgar language.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, he did not think the hon. and learned Member who had just spoken was out of order, because if he were liable to such a charge the Speaker would have interrupted him. He, however, accused the hon. and learned Gentleman of setting a most inconvenient precedent, which if fully followed, would give an opportunity for every individual to repeat his speech a second time in the House. He accused the hon. and learned Gentleman of having taken advantage of the absence of the hon. Member to make his attack upon him. If that hon. Member were in his place he would have been perfectly competent to answer him, and to vindicate his own character from the aspersions which had been cast upon it. The hon. and learned Gentleman's eye, however, while he was addressing the House, was fixed upon the vacancy caused by the absence of the hon. Member. If the hon. Member were present, there was not a charge made on the present occasion that would not have been completely answered.

"Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes."

The hon. and learned Gentleman, above all others, had less right than any other to express surprise at, or to complain of, personalities. Did not the House recollect the significant mode in which he pointed his finger when on a former occasion he, here, there and everywhere addressed hon. Gentlemen? Were there no personal allusions then made? Was that no personality? No doubt the hon. and learned Gentleman thought at the time that he was in the discharge of his duty. He did not mean to deny it; but he said that if personality had constituted the chief part of that speech, the hon. and learned Gentleman was not the man who ought to complain of it in another; nor should he now be so mealy-mouthed; at any rate he hoped that he would not now form an example for others to imitate. He rose rather for the purpose of protesting against the custom of speaking on the main question, or one collateral to it, when the Motion before the House was merely the reading of the Order of the Day. He, however, would not follow the example of which he was complaining; but he hoped that when the hon. and learned Member next addressed the House, it would not be for the purpose of complaining of personality.

Mr. BRIGHT: I agree with the hon. Baronet that this is not a time to enter upon the discussion of this matter; but I am anxious to say a few words with respect to a statement which was made by the hon. Member for Knaresborough, bearing on the conduct of an intimate friend of mine who is not present to defend himself—I mean Mr. George Wilson, the chairman of the League. Now, I don't wish to go into any long details about the trade in starch, for I confess I do not well understand it; but I will take the liberty to say, that almost every portion of that which the hon. Member for Knaresborough stated as fact with respect to that gentleman, and every par-

ticle of that which he stated as inference, was utterly untrue. Mr. Wilson never called a meeting of starch manufacturers, having reference to the question of protective duties; he never presided at any such meeting; he formed no part of a deputation who came up to Government on the subject; and the object of the starch manufacturers was not to obtain protection; but, as the raw material was enhanced in price by protective duties, they thought it, therefore, necessary that the import of the article should have a corresponding duty upon it, on the same principle as there is a duty on foreign malt which comes into this country equal to the duty on malt made from English barley. I have only to say, further, that there is this great defect in all the speeches of the hon. Member—that he makes assertions which he is never able, so far as I have heard or read, to substantiate.

Mr. COLQUHOUN: I shall not follow the hon. Member for Durham into the question of starch, any more than I shall follow the hon. and learned Member for Bath in his lecture on personalities. I rise merely to say that I perfectly agree with the hon. Member for Oxford, that nothing could be more inconvenient than the course which the hon. and learned Member has adopted in raising a discussion of this kind on the reading of the Order of the Day. I am perfectly certain that the hon. Member for Knaresborough would not have shrunk from the discussion, had he been in his place; but I do not think it very convenient for the House to have a duplicate of the discussion raised upon the reading of the Order of the Day; and I do not think it fair, in the absence of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, to raise a question personal to himself, and to defend the character of gentlemen whose conduct he is said to have attacked. I can assure the hon. Member for Durham that the hon. Member for Knaresborough, when in his place, will be ready, I have not the least doubt, to defend all the statements he ever made. ["Oh, oh!"] I repeat that the hon. Member will be prepared to stand by what he has stated; but it will be much more convenient to take up this subject when the party is present, and when we are engaged in discussing the question to which his observations refer.

Dr. BOWRING: I have great reason to complain of the observations of the hon. Member for Knaresborough. There were serious charges in his speech directed against a personal friend of mine—a man whose benevolence is only equalled by his intelligence—I mean Mr. Henry Ashworth, of Bolton, whose "cold-blooded cruelty," to use the expression of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, was brought before this House. The hon. Member talked of the poverty of the people in Mr. Ashworth's employment—of their nakedness, of the wretchedness of their dwellings. Now, I had an opportunity of knowing what was the state of things among that population; and I will venture to say that, during the period of distress which assailed Bolton a few years ago, the population connected with the mills at Turton and Egerton, formed a striking contrast to other places in the neighbourhood. I hope the noble Lord the Member for Newark is in his place, and also the hon. Member for Canterbury, who visited Mr. Ashworth's mills some time ago, for the purpose of ascertaining, from personal observation, and by going into the minutest details, the condition of the numerous body of work-people engaged in these mills. I appeal to them whether there is any truth in the representations which the hon. Member for Knaresborough has made here and elsewhere respecting Mr. Ashworth? If they are present, I know they will do homage to truth and justice, by stating what the facts of the case were which they examined into. I will venture to say, that the statements are altogether untrue. I feel bound to say, further, that if there is any Member of this House who is bound to be singularly scrupulous in the statements he makes here—who ought to examine most fully and attentively and inquiringly into the facts which in his place he ventures to speak of, it is the hon. Member for Knaresborough.

Viscount MORPETH said, as this discussion had been raised, he would read a letter which he had received on the subject of one statement of the hon. Member for Knaresborough. It was from the operatives of Union Mill, whose attention had been attracted by a statement of the hon. Member to the effect that many of the operatives had been compelled by their masters to sign petitions against the Corn Laws. The letter accompanied some petitions, and it said—

"You will receive herewith three petitions; they are signed as free as the air we breathe, and so, as far as we know, have been all the petitions on the same occasion. We make this statement in consequence of what has been said by Mr. Ferrand; and we can say more:—we are more

anxious than even our employers are for the total and immediate repeal of all duties on the importation of provisions."

He had received other letters to the same effect.

COMMERCIAL POLICY—CUSTOMS—CORN LAWS — ADJOURNED DEDATE — (ELEVENTH NIGHT).

MR. D. R. ROSS commenced the Adjourned Debate by referring to the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand). He proceeded: If the hon. Gentleman who spoke last had addressed himself to the question before the House, and not blinked it, I should have felt myself bound either to yield to his arguments, or to endeavour to answer them. But, I did not consider myself called on to deal with the late election in the West Riding of Yorkshire, nor to defend the Anti-Corn-Law League, nor to take up the cudgels for the manufacturers, nor to offer apologies for right hon. Gentlemen opposite, nor to make it appear that the hon. Member for Stockport never sold milk to his workmen. I think it is perfectly disgusting, to be forced to sit listening to such idle talk as has been indulged in, while famine has already begun the work of desolation, and the poor sufferers in Ireland are turning imploring looks to the Legislature for relief. If we are to argue, night after night, let us, at least, avoid the indecent delays occasioned by reiterated personalities. Why did not the hon. Member for Knaresborough show, or attempt to show, that the mass of the labouring population, whose advocate he has constituted himself, would be worse off under a system of free import than they now are? But his argument went only to show, that whereas the agricultural labourer is at present very poorly off, the manufacturing labourer, the better paid, is treated with cruelty and neglect; and that, in point of fact, the rich of all classes conspire against the poor. Now, I have attended to this debate, and, I must say, I have heard nothing which goes to show that the labouring classes, of whose earnings so large a proportion must be spent in food, would not be great gainers by a permanent diminution of the price of their daily bread. I don't deny, that the poor man's interest in protection, as it is called, has been strongly asserted; but has it been proved? Two or three noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen who have taken the protection side in this debate, have, indeed, claimed for its leading advocates the credit of having supported their views by arguments which their opponents have shunned to grapple with. One of these forgot, apparently, the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, who, as well as the right hon. Baronet, pointed out some of the difficulties attendant on the doctrines of which the hon. Member for Northamptonshire was the eloquent, but, in my opinion, not very successful advocate. The country must decide whether these self-crowned combatants shall wear their laurels or not. The hon. Member for Northamptonshire threw one of his arguments into a syllogistic form, and thereby made the fallacy it contains easy of detection. He undertook to prove what I may call the cardinal proposition of his speech, after this fashion: "The labourer has a right to legislative protection." That was the proposition he undertook to prove. "A man's labour," argued the hon. Gentleman, "is his property"—*ergo* "property is entitled to protection." Now, the conclusion he would draw, does not follow from these premises. Is it not clear as the day, that it is only by playing and punning upon the words "property" and "protection," that any semblance of truth is lent to the proposition which the hon. Member seemed to think he had incontrovertibly established? No doubt, every man has a clear right to exercise his industry, without let or hindrance, on the part of any other. To this amount he has a rightful claim on the Legislature for protection; but, does it therefore follow, that the Legislature is bound also to secure to him profitable application of his labour, by excluding rivals, and establishing a monopoly in his favour? Surely, the same things cannot be predicative of property in labour, which can be predicative of property in goods or houses. If so, it ought to be penal to interfere with the former as with the latter; and the laws ought to transport a man for "robbing" another of his property in labour. The word "protection" was used by the hon. Gentleman in a double sense, fatal to logical accuracy. But, I need say no more: the House perceives the unsoundness of the hon. Gentleman's logic; and further exposure would be tedious and unprofitable. Let me, however, remind the hon. Gentleman to what conclusion his reasons inevitably tend, and ask him whether he could make up his mind to abide by it? Set aside all domestic competition—which, however, the hon. Gentleman did not distinctly except—and say

whether, supposing the attempt to cultivate vineyards, and manufacture wine, in the south of England, had been persisted in, the producer of such wine would have had a rightful claim on Parliament to place his commodity on a footing of artificial equality with the produce of the south of France? If that cannot be maintained with regard to a luxury, what shall be said of one of the prime necessaries of life—bread? According to my apprehension, the argument cannot be pressed to its legitimate conclusion, without reaching the point of absurdity, which stands in lieu of all other refutation. It may be the part of wisdom, on the ground of expediency, to impose taxes on bread, or it may not; but, whoever shall attempt to establish the claim of one portion of the community to enrich itself at the expense of another, on the high principles of an abstract right, will find himself reduced to use such fallacies as the hon. Member for Northamptonshire has imposed on his own understanding, by a juggle of words, not very dexterous. With regard to the general question of protection, as it is called, the wisdom of our ancestors has been appealed to; and we have been told, that for 200 years the principle has been recognised and acted on. Yet, our ancestors had some glimmering of light on this subject. About 200 years ago, language was used in the House of Commons, which either of the hon. Baronets opposite might consistently adopt in supporting their present measure:—

> "It is trade that brings food and nourishment to the kingdom; it is that which preserves and increases the stock of the whole, and distributes a convenient portion of maintenance to every part of it; therefore, such obstruction as this must needs be dangerous; the freedom of trade being so necessary, the benefit so important, that it gives life, strength, and beauty to the whole body of the Commonwealth."

Thus spoke Pym, in the course of the farmers' conference with the Lords, which he was appointed to conduct; and there were other minds, in that day, besides his, cast in the same mould of statesmanship—great in comprehensiveness and power, fully awake to the vital truth enunciated in the passage I have quoted. I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Dublin speak in defence of the great principle of free trade, in its application to Ireland. The statistical facts which he urged, deserve the utmost attention. I shall accept the challenge he threw out, and say a few words on a subject of which I ought to have some knowledge. In supporting the prayer of a petition presented by me on the first night of the debate, which speaks the wishes of every flaxspinner in Belfast, of every operative, I believe, and of a vast majority of men of all parties engaged in other departments of industry, I would intreat those hon. Members who may favour me with a few minutes' attention, to believe that I stand free of all suspicion of speaking from interested or double motives. It is true that my constituents, almost to a man, earnestly desire the total and immediate repeal of these mischievous laws. It is true that names appear on the petitions presented by me, from Belfast and Larne, which were never before found in conjunction on any political subject; but it is also true that I neither adopted these views to obtain nor to secure my seat, but was chosen on account of the opinions I had formed and avowed, long before the dissolution of 1841. I was then far in advance of those who honoured me with their confidence; for, whilst they would have been fully satisfied with the 8*s.* fixed duty proposed by the noble Lord, I had arrived at the point where the right hon. Baronet now is, and actually suggested the adoption of the plan originally proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Montrose—that of gradual, but total and final, repeal. As a country gentleman, I thought the welfare of the whole community demanded free trade in the prime necessaries of life. My own subsistence depends altogether on land. Now, I might perhaps go as far as many others, to peril life and property, on a great occasion, in the service of my country—I hope we should all be ready to do so, But I do not desire to claim credit for, nor do I expect from others, that more than Roman virtue, which would impel a man deliberately to cast himself, and all he most loves and values, into a pit of destruction, for the general good. My opinion is, and has long been, that we shall do no disservice, but the contrary, in the long run, to labourer, tenant-farmer, or landowner, by establishing a free trade in corn, and abolishing all merely protective duties; and I share this conviction with many gentlemen in Ireland, possessed of large estates—men of high intelligence, and exceedingly well informed on agricultural subjects. I differ with the Member for Dublin University, who, in a speech half philippic, half jeremiad, prophesied ruin to Ireland, as the consequences of this measure. The gallant Officer who represented Donegal was, also,

a prophet of evil; but I hope he will be obliged, one day, to confess his error. In the case of the Irish millers, he reasoned on partial and narrow grounds; just as he has done in the present instance. Nobody doubts that the manufacturing interests will be largely benefited by the change proposed; few doubt that the condition of the skilled labourer will rise with that of his employer. Now, as has been already observed, seasons of agricultural prosperity have ever been coincident with manufacturing. It cannot be otherwise. At such times, more consumers of agricultural produce come into the market; and the habitual consumers of beef, mutton, pork, cheese, butter—to say nothing of corn—buy these things in larger quantities—a fact too much lost sight of in this discussion. I well remember my first visit to the great tryst of Dumbarton. On the eve of the day of sale, I found the Highlanders engaged in settling the scale of prices for the following day, and governed in their decision by the latest news from Leeds and Manchester. This, then, may be assumed to be generally true, that the market price of agricultural produce rises and falls with the ebb and flow of manufacturing prosperity; and this is my first ground of hope, for my own corn and provision exporting country—Ireland. Next, I look to the powers of the land itself—to mechanical contrivances, and scientific management. During the late war, much capital was squandered in ignorant attempts to realize fortunes by farming. People are wiser now-a-days. Economy is the main secret of the prosperous farmer; I mean such wise economy as is consistent with increased production. The necessity for economical administration has arisen from the keen competition of enterprising and intelligent farmers for the possession of land; and that stimulus, which has worked so much good in the Lothians, and in Roxburghshire, for instance, will be again applied, with like results, but on a larger scale, in the parallel case of competition with foreigners. It is with farming, as with every thing else. Generally speaking, if little exertion and little contrivance suffice to ensure tolerable comfort, little will be done. It is not under genial skies, or on soils of inexhaustible fertility, that the science of agriculture has been studied with the deepest attention, or the art practised with the most signal success; but rather where the caprice and rigour of the seasons, and the stubborn or infertile character of the soil, necessitate skill, vigilance, ingenuity, and unremitting toil. Norfolk and Scotland were first in the race of improvement. I will not say what counties or countries are last. If we had in England a bread-fruit tree, we should have a listless, lazy, South-Sea Islander sort of people to eat of it. I am sure there were no good farmers in the golden age. We, farmers' friends, have tried to create a golden age for our own people; but, so far as we have gone, all experience has proved, that the removal of our wise means and appliances to make money-getting an easy affair, has served the community, and the producer also. The right hon. Baronet, in his first speech, adverted to an illustration full to the point, and applicable both to the raw material and to the late manufactured article; and I think his late rejoinder justified him fully, and rebutted the counter assertion of the hon. Member for Somersetshire. If the duty of 10*l.* per ton, formerly imposed on foreign flax, had continued to the present day, I very much doubt whether I should ever have seen flax, the produce of the county of Armagh, sold in the market at the rate of 19*s.* 6*d.* a stone; or whether any Irish farmer would have dreamed of the possibility of raising a crop of flax equal in quality to the best which Belgium can produce. But these things have been done. The hon. Member for Somersetshire will have it, indeed, that it will not pay to cultivate flax in England, now that the 10*l.* duty is removed; and he quoted some statistical facts to make good an assertion which, I confess, startled me. I pass by the little slip he made, as to the connexion between the abolition of duty and the abandonment of the culture of flax, in the parish of Chizelham. He was set right on that head by the right hon. Baronet, who also drew, from the great extension of flax cultivation in Ireland, and from the greatness and thriving character of the linen manufacture, evidence of remuneration to the Irish cultivator of the crop. What a vast trade has grown up in Ulster, under a free system! How ricketty was the trade before! Out of a population of 2,386,972, 500,000 persons derive their support from this business. The wages exceed 1,200,000*l.* The capital employed, 5,000,000*l.* The value of Ulster linen, 4,000,000*l.* per annum. Last year, 60,000 new spindles were added, in Belfast alone, involving an outlay of about 240,000*l.* of sunk capital. All the linen weavers are at work on an increase of wages; yet the ar-

ticle sells at one third what it commanded but a few years ago. The hon. Member will allow—for the fact is notorious—the rapid and constant increase of flax culture in Ireland; but he observes, labour is cheaper in Ireland. Not a bit—in Ulster. The wages of labour are as high in the neighbourhood of Belfast as in Northampton, and much higher than in Wilts and Hampshire. I strongly suspect, labour has been unskilfully applied, in the case referred to. I once heard a Lincolnshire farmer, Mr. Warnes, say, he had found it advantageous to grow flax, for the sake of the food it produced for his cattle ; adding, what set us all in a roar, that he had made a journey to Belfast, in order to learn what to do with the straw. [*Laughter.*] I advise the Essex farmer to try the flaxseed in fattening their calves ; and, also, to make use of the straw. There must have been some bad management in the parish of Chizelham. Let me ask the hon. Member for Armagh this question. On which crop does the farmer in his county depend principally—on the protected or the unprotected crop—on his wheat or on his flax ? Why, his reliance is on the flax, a product in which he is rivalled to the extent of 4,000,000*l.* of value by the foreigner ; yet, he is now meeting and underselling the foreigner in Germany ; and the flax which he sells, at a high price, to the Belfast spinner, finds its way, in a manufactured state, into France, in spite of the tariff, and 30 per cent duty. I have adverted to the enormous amount of raw flax annually imported into the United Kingdom. Now why should not Ireland, admirably suited, in point of climate and soil, to the production of this invaluable plant, supplant the Belgian, and drive the greater part of the foreign supply out of our markets ? The Belfast Flax Improvement Society has already done wonders. Beautiful flax has been sent to our factories from Munster, and from the remotest parts of Connaught; and, if but a sixteenth of the arable land, fit for the cultivation of this crop, were sown down with it every year, the Irish farmer and the Irish manufacturer would alike be benefited. The returns of land in Ireland, fit for tillage, and so employed, show a gross amount of 13,464,300 acres. In the district where flax enters into the regular rotation, one-fifth part of the farm bears that crop annually. This is far too large a portion to be devoted to flax ; but it marks the value of the crop in the farmer's estimation. I find, that in Belgium not more than a tenth or eleventh of the arable land is thus occupied. Now, suppose the sixteenth part of the 13,464,000 Irish acres sown with flax, we should have no less than 841,518 acres, producing, at the rate of 6 cwt. per acre, 252,455 tons of this remunerative crop, worth, at the most moderate estimate, more than 10,000,000*l.* The half of this would supply the wants of the United Kingdom, according to the present demand, and afford employment and support to a third part of our teeming population. I want to know, too, what should hinder us from competing successfully with the Dutch butter ? In London alone 6,000 barrels of Dutch butter are sold every week. Are the pastures of Carlow and Cork, of Limerick and Tipperary, less verdant than the flats of Holland ; or, rather, has the Dutch farmer, who feeds his cows in the house, any advantage, as regards the excellence of the article, over the Irish farmer, whose cows range over some of the richest pastures in the world ? No ; but we want the Dutchman's method, and his cleanliness. Yet, we are improving ; and I am happy to be able to state, that considerable quantities of butter—house-fed butter, too—are sent, by the daily packets, from Belfast to Liverpool or Fleetwood, and sell in the market, at very remunerating prices. As an instance of the relief which improvements afford to the farmer, permit me to glance at that arising from the introduction of efficient and portable manures. Under the common five-course rotation, one-fifth of the farm will, of course, be under green crops—turnips and potatoes. The carting and spreading of farm-yard manure is so exceedingly expensive as to run away, in most cases, with a large portion of the gross profit—in some cases, of the whole. Hence, I have often known the land given rent free, to be well manured. But I have ascertained, by accurate experiment, that, taking into account all expenses, rent included, a profit of 16*l.* an acre can be drawn from potato ground manured with guano, and almost as much on land manured with crushed bones. Or, take the matter in another point of view. Suppose a small farmer, such as we have in Ulster, holding ten acres of land, at a rent of 1*l.* per acre, to employ half his farm-yard manure in top-dressing his clover, the other half in manuring his green crop, in combination with guano—the difference of expense between the two being 5*l.* per acre—the saving, under the pre-

sent supposition, would be 2*l.* 10*s.*, which, distributed over the whole ten acres, would be 5*l.*, that is, 10*s.* an acre, or half the average rent. From these considerations —1st, from the dependence of agriculture on manufactures; 2nd, from the fact that in Ireland the resources of the soil have been, as yet, very imperfectly developed; 3rd, from the decided experiment with regard to the culture of flax, and the fair prospect before us of like success in the production of butter; 4th, from the known results of applying portable and fertilizing manures, by means of which a saving equal to half the rent may be effected—I have arrived at the conclusion (which I challenge any opponent to prove unfounded), that if the Irish landowners and occupiers of the soil will but avail themselves of the resources at their disposal, they need not fear the rivalry of the foreigner, even though the prices of corn were permanently depressed; because they have the means of compensating for diminished price by increasing production, and, besides, they will be enabled to buy cheaper every other article of consumption, while they sell dearer every product of the soil, corn excepted. But we are threatened with starvation! In the blind pursuit of abundance, we are rushing into the jaws of famine! Land is to be thrown out of tillage to an enormous extent! Our dependence on foreign nations is to be absolute! A year of universal scarcity may bring us to a state of absolute want, and to the verge of national ruin! Sir, I believe nothing of the kind can take place. If there be any truth in what I have advanced, the apprehension is chimerical. Already means have been found to alter the very texture of soils, on which their fertility or barrenness depends. And as to the contingencies of an universal failure throughout the civilized world, let the extent of fertile districts which freedom of commerce in corn, aided by the facilities for its transport from inland countries to the sea, afforded by railways, be taken into account. The cost of conveyance to the Baltic ports, for an extra distance of 250 miles, has been found to double the price of the commodity, owing to the difficulties of navigation. But that expense will be greatly diminished in the course of a few years. Improvement, and the certainty of finding a market, will induce and justify efforts which, in the present uncertain state of the corn trade, it would be madness in the remote foreign cultivator to make. I may safely refer hon. Gentlemen who make use of this argument to the hon. Member for Somersetshire. He thinks every interest will be swept away by an inundation of foreign corn; and, lest the destructive flood should abate, unfailing supplies will flow in from the reservoirs of the warehouse. Were it otherwise, can we deem it to be within the bounds of reasonable probability that all the countries from which supplies of corn can be derived —countries widely differing from each other in soils and climates—should simultaneously be visited with the affliction of dearth in the same products; that a blight should fall, in one year, upon the shores of Michigan and the Black Sea; upon the banks of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Vistula; on Canada and on Russia? Surely, we need not distress ourselves with imaginary cases of far-fetched possibilities. To me, such a calamity seems to be a mere phantom of the examination; a thing quite out of the constituted order of nature—inconsistent with that providential arrangement which supplies food in abundance for all the creatures of God's hand, and has spread out the ocean as a great highway for the distribution, throughout the world, of the fruits of His exuberant bounty. Another argument, glanced at in the course of this debate, and much insisted on by one of our cleverest periodical works —I mean *Blackwood's Magazine*—is based on the supposition, that one day or other our supplies of food may be intercepted by the fleets of a victorious enemy. Sir, our case, in such an event, would be bad indeed; bad, whether the Corn Laws were abolished or not; our ships taken or sunk, our Colonies lost, our commerce annihilated; what would remain for us but peace on any terms — peace at the dictation of a triumphant and insulting enemy? *Væ victis!* Is the supposition one on which the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland ought to base its measures? That is the question. Sir, it ill becomes either individual men or nations to boast; but I may be permitted to express the modest confidence I repose in the naval resources of this nation, in the discipline of our sailors, in the skill of their officers, in the valour that is common to both; and if it should come to pass that French or American Van Tromps and De Witts shall head the fleets of our enemies, and threaten to sweep the British Channel clear of our ships, we have ample proof, up to the pre-

sent day, that the breed of British seamen is not extinct; and ample ground for the assurance that new Monks, and Deans, and Blakes, will be found to meet them on our own channel, and maintain the ancient glory of our unsullied flag. I know "the battle is not always to the strong;" but I know also, and am persuaded, that the government of the world is not capricious. Let who will call it enthusiasm—fanaticism: I have a deep-seated confidence. that as long as our naval supremacy is a guarantee for freedom of trade, and the diffusion of knowledge and civilization—as long as this country shall be an asylum and a sanctuary for the oppressed of all nations—as long as freedom and enlightenment follow in the train of our colonization—as long as the sceptre of this kingdom is swayed over its wide dependencies in equity and beneficence—as long as, desiring pacific and friendly relations with all the world, regarding war as the last of calamities, we maintain the character of that magnanimous meekness which becomes our exalted station, so long shall we come conquerors out of every righteous struggle—so long shall the Island Queen be Queen of the circling seas. These, Sir, are my hopes and my opinions, not hastily formed; and, strengthened by every year's experience, I say to this House, do what is just and right, and fear nothing.

Mr. BECKETT DENISON regretted that his hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough was not in his place; because the hon. Gentleman had in his (Mr. Denison's) absence, alluded to him in a manner and in terms which he deeply regretted being obliged to say were in no way warranted. The hon. Gentleman had stated that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, in doing him (Mr. Denison) the honour of asking him to second the Address at the opening of the Session, had deceived him as to the measures which the right hon. Baronet intended to propose. It was hardly necessary for him to say that the right hon. Baronet, if not the last man, was certainly one of the last men, in the country who would deceive any one. He (Mr. Denison) was bound to say that the right hon. Baronet had not directly or indirectly deceived him. He must take leave to add, that he joined in the wish which had been expressed by several hon. Gentlemen, that his hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough would be more cautious in future when addressing the House in alluding to private individuals; so doing would tend to raise his character in the House, and in public estimation. Having disposed of this subject (he hoped satisfactorily to the right hon. Baronet)—[Sir R. Peel: Hear!]—he should proceed to say, that when he (Mr. Denison) had the honour of seconding the Address, he did conceive, from what the right hon. Baronet had communicated to him, that the Government would bring forward measures of the same character as those which they had propounded within the last three or four years, and which he (Mr. Denison) considered had certainly been most successful; and he also thought that a discussion would take place on the subject of the Corn Laws. But he would frankly own that he did not expect that the right hon. Baronet would propose the total abolition of the Corn Laws, even accompanied by a sliding-scale for three years; and by certain (so called) "compensatory" enactments. He would also admit, that in so doing he considered the right hon. Baronet had committed a "great mistake"—an error which he feared many would have to deplore, but which he hoped the right hon. Baronet would never have reason to regret; for although prepared to oppose the measure, he certainly hoped, should it pass, that it might be successful, and promote those interests which, he doubted not, the right hon. Baronet wished to benefit. He must do the right hon. Baronet the justice to say, that he believed that unless he had felt overpowered by a strong sense of public duty, he would not have ventured to bring forward such a measure. It would be admitted that it was as much the duty of Governments as of individuals to exert themselves for the promotion of the employment of the people; and to furnish them, in the best possible way, at once with the requisite supply of provision and the means of procuring it. He (Mr. Denison) could conscientiously state, that in supporting the Corn Laws as he had done for several years, he had been influenced solely by that consideration. He had never advocated the Corn Laws for the benefit of the landlords. Nor had he advocated them solely for the interest even of the tenantry—that hardworking and deserving race of men, the yeomen and the pride of England; but the great anxiety on his mind had been in favour of the working classes of the community at large: and he would frankly admit, that if he could be convinced that the measure before the House would really benefit the working classes, he would at once become a Corn

Law repealer. But until convinced of that, he should remain firm in his adherence to his original principles; being satisfied that the continuance of the Corn Laws was for the advantage of the working classes generally, and not for the benefit of the landed interest alone. He must ask leave to take a brief review of the state of things in this country for the last few years, in connexion with this subject. Within this century the population had doubled—within this century the price of corn had fallen nearly 50 per cent. At this time, 1846, there was not a larger proportion of the population fed by foreign wheat than at the commencement of the century; and yet during all this period the country had been under the operation of the Corn Laws, which had been changed from time to time against the landed interest, though of course professedly for the good of the public. Then, referring to pauperism—the poor rates within the last century had greatly decreased: we raised less money in 1841 than in 1810. Yet all this while we had been under the operation of the Corn Laws. Lest he should be in error on this subject, especially after the extraordinary statements of the right hon. the Vice President of the Board of Trade (Sir G. Clerk), to which he should soon allude, he would quote from a document prepared from Parliamentary Papers, representing the importations of corn in decennial periods:—

AVERAGE IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN WHEAT.

Between	1791	and	1800 ...	470,000	quarters.
,,	1801	,,	1810 ...	455,000	,,
,,	1811	,,	1820 ...	429,000	,,
,,	1821	,,	1830 ...	534,000	,,
,,	1831	,,	1840 ...	908,000	,,
,,	1841	,,	1846 ...	1,300,000	,,

the last period being, it would be observed, five years only. On examination, however, of these Papers, it would be found that, in some of the years, not much more than 100,000 quarters of foreign wheat had been imported; so abundant had been our harvests at home, and so perfectly able was the country, in ordinary years, to supply an abundance of corn for the whole community. Thus, there were entered for home consumption (of foreign wheat imported)—

In 1844 ... 822,000 quarters.
In 1845 ... 136,000 quarters.

Yet they were told that it was necessary to take off the Corn Laws, that the population might have foreign corn imported to any amount. It appeared to him that no interest had been so cruelly treated, or so hardly pressed, as that of agriculture. In 1815 there was a prohibitory duty upon foreign corn, until the price here reached 80*s*. In 1822 that price was reduced to 70*s*. In 1828 there was a new law, introducing a "sliding-scale," which lasted till 1842, when the rate of duty was reduced 50 per cent; and now, in 1846, when the last law had not been in operation four years, total abolition was proposed. Surely there should be "a case" made out against the agricultural interest, before such a sudden and extensive change could be justly proposed or acceded to. It ought to be made out that the agriculturists had established a system which had worked extremely ill—that the price of wheat had risen as the rate of population increased—that the people had been starving. Then, indeed, it might have been reasonably said, "We can endure this law no longer!" But the very reverse of all this had been the fact. He had attempted already to prove—and trusted that he had succeeded in satisfying the House—that within the present century the improvement of agriculture had been going on at the same rate as the increase of the population. ["Hear, hear!"] He understood that cheer. He gave the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury bench the full benefit of conceding that agriculture was still in its infancy. But he said, while there was no reason to doubt that agriculture would continue to improve, and while he did not question that our agriculture possessed full power to meet the exigencies of an increasing population—he thought the Legislature ought to behave fairly to agriculture—that it ought to give the agriculturists a lease of the measure passed in 1842, as it had done with the law of 1828—that it ought to have waited until it was seen whether the agriculturists would exert themselves, and put their shoulders to the wheel (or rather to the plough), as they had hitherto done—that it ought to have ascertained whether there would be any just ground of complaint on the score of deficient supply of food; and he believed that, though of course the agriculturists could not control the changes of the seasons, they would be found to do all that was required to supply the national necessities. He had been much astonished by the speech of the right hon. the Vice President of the Board of Trade (Sir G. Clerk), who said—

"Within the last ten years, we had imported nearly 10,000,000 of quarters of corn, giving an average of nearly 2,000,000 quarters a year."

That, of course, was a mistake of the printers. [Sir G. CLERK: Five years.] Taking the right hon. Gentleman's correction, the calculation remained inexplicable; 2,000,000 quarters of wheat imported yearly must surely be a mere misprint. However, the right hon. Baronet continued—

"No one could say that the people had been meanwhile at all overfed. If the population were to go on increasing for the ten years to come, as it had been during the ten years preceding, an annual average import of 3,000,000 quarters would not be greater than the country would require. Not only would not a single acre be thrown out of cultivation, but there would be a greater demand for the home-grown wheat than at present. The experience of the last thirty years had satisfied him that the rate of population advanced more rapidly than the rate of production, and that we must increase our imports of foreign corn."

All that he could say was, that if the Vice President of the Board of Trade was right, then he (Mr. Denison) must be wrong. His right hon. Friend said, that the quantity of corn imported within the last five years was greater than in the preceding years; but he had just referred to figures, and he would beg to refer his right hon. Friend to them. The whole question before the House was this: "Are the Corn Laws calculated to promote the comfort and happiness of the working classes, and thereby increase the wealth and power of the nation?" He frankly admitted that unless the comfort and happiness of the people were increasing, the wealth and power of the nation must decrease, and that that decrease would necessarily be succeeded by disease, poverty, and distress. Unless it could be shown that the Corn Laws had the effect of increasing the comfort and happiness of the people, he would vote against them. He presumed, however, that there was ample evidence to show that protection had that desirable effect. But by the Tariff of 1842, the right hon. Baronet reduced the duties upon meat and animals generally. He was one of those who thought the right hon. Baronet did perfectly right. He did not agree with his hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) in the opinion expressed by him on that occasion; because, at that time, the price of meat was rising in the market. He was now quite ready to say, that if the price of wheat were rising in the market, you ought to take off the duty, and give the people an opportunity of getting cheaper corn; therefore, although, in his opinion, the right hon. Baronet was quite right in his measure with respect to meat, it did not follow that he was correct with respect to corn. There was also a reduction of duty on sugar. But there was no analogy between the duty upon sugar and duty upon corn. The duty was imposed upon sugar expressly for the purpose of revenue. He believed the quantity of sugar imported had been nearly stationary for some years past; and the consequence must be that the price would rise, or a certain portion of the people would be certainly deprived of that necessary article of life. The Government, therefore, were right in reducing the duty on sugar; so with respect to coffee, and various other articles which were not grown at home. But he saw no analogy between articles grown abroad, and those grown at home. The Corn Laws ought not to be considered as a fiscal regulation: they ought to be contemplated as a system for giving encouragement to the cultivation of home-grown corn. Viewed in this light, he believed that the destruction of such a system would ultimately prove as detrimental to the manufacturing interests as to the agricultural. He had ascertained some of the consequences which resulted from a good harvest and a bad one; and he must say that it appeared to him that much error prevailed upon this subject. It had been stated, over and over again, that wages were never so good, and employment never so plentiful, as when the price of corn was low. He admitted that this was true, with a few additional words, namely, when that lowness of price was the consequence of a good harvest. For he maintained that neither the agricultural interest nor the manufacturing interest could be in a healthy state, unless they had the advantage of a good harvest. He would challenge any one to show an instance of the people of the manufacturing districts being in full employment after a bad harvest; and he would challenge any one to show an instance where the people of those districts were out of work after a good harvest. The explanation was easy and clear. After a plentiful harvest the price might be low, but there was more corn to sell; so that there was an increase of wealth in the nation, and more corn to consume. The farmer, though getting lower prices, brought home more money, and had greater encouragement to employ labour; while the labourers got an ampler supply of the necessaries of life

than they would otherwise receive even with higher wages. But if the position of affairs were reversed, and if the results of a bad harvest were examined, it would be found, on asking the shopkeepers in a country town how they got on, they would reply that "there had been a bad harvest," and therefore "they sell nothing." What he would impress upon the House, therefore, was the immense importance of encouraging agriculture as much as possible. He asked not high duties—he desired not prohibition, but protection, believing it to be for the benefit of the nation that agriculture should be encouraged. As to the manufacturers they never were in a good state when the price of corn on account of a bad harvest was high. And here he would observe that the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Russell) was, he doubted not, fully alive to the value of good harvests; the bad harvests of 1839, 1840, and 1841 — accompanied as they were by distress and discontent in the manufacturing districts, did more to shake public confidence in the noble Lord's Administration than almost anything else. [Lord J. Russell: Hear.] And, to do justice both to the noble Lord, and to the right hon. Baronet now at the head of the Government, he must add, that the good harvests since the right hon. Baronet came into office had very much assisted his Administration. Again, they all remembered that in 1833, 1834, and 1835, when there were remarkably good harvests, the manufacturing districts were well employed; while it was equally well known that in 1823, 1824, and 1825, there were good harvests, and manufactures were most flourishing. The noble Lord (the Member for London) made an observation the other night which was deserving of notice. The noble Lord said, that the case of the Corn Laws was one of exceeding difficulty; that many eminent men had written upon the subject; but every one of these learned writers had been puzzled as to the best mode of dealing with the subject. Now, with all respect for the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel,) and with a candid declaration, that if he (Mr. Denison) were compelled to choose a pilot to steer the vessel of the State through the shoals and breakers that might beset its course, he would take the right hon. Gentleman; but so long as he (Mr. E. B. Denison) possessed any judgment to guide his conduct, and had the power to speak for himself, he must act upon his own convictions. He therefore could not accept the invitation for the abolition of the Corn Laws. Even if the proposition and the measure were right, still the time for bringing it forward was wrong and unfortunately chosen. The right hon. Gentleman had taken the country by surprise, which ought not to have been done. The measure put 300 Gentlemen, who were most anxious to support Her Majesty's Government, in the painful position either of voting against their leader, or of voting against their conscience, or of resigning their trust into the hands of their constituents. He might have resorted to the last alternative; but he confessed he preferred rather to vote against the Government, which, up till now, he had most sincerely supported. He had, however, another reason for voting against the present Motion. In 1841, he (Mr. E. B. Denison) was, as his hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. C. Wood) would admit, pressed into the service of his country, by being urged to become a candidate to represent the West Riding of Yorkshire. He was so required to stand for the express purpose of opposing the two most popular men in the kingdom, Lord Milton and Lord Morpeth—men whom, under ordinary circumstances, he should never have dreamt of opposing. But he was selected by his friends on that occasion, because they knew that he had always advocated protection to agriculture. He accordingly presumed to present himself to the electors of the West Riding; but he never made them any promises; he gave no pledges; undoubtedly he did state that he was a sincere advocate for protection, and he now felt that he was as much bound in honour and good faith to keep his word, as if he had entered into the most solemn engagement. From those declarations he would not swerve. He might possibly be induced to forfeit his bond; but his word of honour he would never break. To the surprise of everybody —certainly to his own surprise, and to that of the hon. Member for Halifax—he (Mr. Denison) and Mr. Wortley were elected. The hon. Member for Halifax laughed at the notion of Mr. Denison being brought forward as the opponent of Lord Morpeth, and in a tone of confident triumph, exclaimed—"Now then, we shall have a stand-up fight; there are Wortley and Denison against Milton and Morpeth, we will meet them, and lick them both most heartily;" to the surprise, however, of every man, Mr. Wortley and he (Mr. De-

nison) were elected. But so little was he disposed to go into the contest, that he made a proposition to his opponents, that if they would withdraw one of their own candidates, and let the Conservatives have one Member, he would not be the cause of a contest. But the idea of allowing a Conservative to be returned for the West Riding of Yorkshire was laughed at, while the Whigs offered the people "Cheap corn! cheap timber! and cheap sugar!" He, on that occasion, told his hon. Friend (Mr. C. Wood) to take care, that they did not thrash both his candidates; the warning was unheeded; the election went on, and the Conservatives were triumphant. Well, then, in 1846, without a single reason being assigned, even by the right hon. Gentleman himself, for this proposal to abolish the Corn Laws, how could he justify himself, after having opposed the noble Lord (who was now his hon. Colleague) in 1841 upon that very question—how, he asked, could he justify himself in supporting the proposition of Her Majesty's Government? He should be ashamed of himself to do so. If he changed his mind upon the subject, he should have been bound in honour to have resigned. True, he might, indeed, have avoided that course by simply saying "he had changed his mind, and so disposed of all his former speeches." But being determined to stand by his former speeches, and not having changed his mind, he must vote against the measure. There was one other point to which he must allude. His noble Colleague (Lord Morpeth) seemed to fancy that his not being opposed at the late election of a Member for the West Riding in consequence of Lord Wharncliffe's death, was indicative of a very general change having taken place in the minds of the people in that part of the kingdom upon this subject. But he would ask the noble Lord not to deceive himself upon that point. There were various circumstances which induced the friends of protection to say, "We will not offer any opposition to the noble Lord on this occasion." But he could assure the noble Lord that if it had been a general election, and if the public had known then as they did now what was the proposition of Her Majesty's Government, the noble Lord would have had to encounter a very sharp contest. He would further tell the noble Lord that many gentlemen of influence and property, who, in 1841, supported the noble Lord, had since told him (Mr. E. B. Denison) that it was true they did, in 1841, give the noble Lord their support, in opposition to Mr. Wortley and himself, but circumstances were so changed that a protection candidate for the future might rely on their best services. That occurred only the other day. Therefore he thought it his duty to tell the noble Lord that he must not indulge the pleasing idea that by giving support to the repeal of the Corn Laws, he would insure his return at the next election. The hon. Gentleman concluded by saying, that he had not changed his mind upon the policy of the Corn Laws, and he therefore steadily opposed their abolition; for he was not prepared to give any man in Yorkshire, whether of 25,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* a year, or the poorest voter who voted for him at the last election, the opportunity of saying—"I took you upon your word of honour, but you have betrayed me, and deceived me."

Mr. BROTHERTON said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken seemed to imagine that there was something derogatory in a man's changing his mind. Now, he (Mr. Brotherton) had read in a good book, that "a wise man doubteth often, and changeth his mind, but he who is not wise is obstinate and perseveres in his error." The hon. Member had said that if the Corn Laws were not beneficial to the working classes he would repeal them, and that his only motive for supporting them was that he believed them to be beneficial to the people; and that he did not support them from a mixed motive of their being beneficial either to the farmer or the landlord. He had also adduced certain figures to prove that they must have been beneficial to the community at large, inasmuch as fewer persons were now fed on foreign corn, than at the time the Corn Law was enacted in 1815. He was at issue with the hon. Gentleman upon that point. The returns presented to the House showed that for the period from 1815 to 1821 only one in thirty of the population was fed upon foreign corn; that upon the average of ten years to 1831, one in twenty-two of the population were fed upon foreign corn; and upon the average of the ten years to 1841, one in sixteen and a half were so fed. If the hon. Gentleman would take a note of the quantity of wheat and wheat flour imported into this kingdom for the last eight years, he would find that one in ten of the population had to be fed upon foreign corn. Therefore if the Corn Laws

answered the purpose for which the hon. Gentleman supposed them to be enacted—that of feeding the people, and not of keeping up prices—he must admit that they had failed of that effect. He (Mr. Brotherton) would admit that many honest persons supported the Corn Law with a view to promote agriculture, without having exclusively in their minds the desire of keeping up rents. Many, no doubt, advocated the law for the sole object of enabling this country to be independent of foreign supplies. But the question was, had the Corn Laws answered the end intended? Was the home supply sufficient for the population? On the contrary, instead of the population of Great Britain being supplied with sufficient food by the home market, the dependence of the country for corn from our foreign neighbours had been gradually increasing — ay, and this increased dependence more than before the Corn Laws were enacted; and this fact disposed of the argument. Again, let the hon. Gentleman consider whether there was not sufficient reason for Her Majesty's Ministers to change their opinions upon this subject. Were there not four millions of people in Ireland living upon potatoes? The right hon. Baronet had stated that he believed those poor people were upon the verge of famine; potatoes had risen 50 per cent in price during the last year. Trade was in a state of stagnation. Every letter he (Mr. Brotherton) received from Manchester stated that trade was paralysed; and he had the opportunity of attending a deputation which waited on the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel), who represented to that hon. Gentleman that the people in the manufacturing district were alarmed lest the scenes of 1841 and 1842 should come again. [Sir R. Peel: Hear, hear.] He (Mr. Brotherton) well remembered those scenes—he was present at them, and he was now deeply impressed with the conviction that it was the duty of Parliament to provide food for the people. He was surprised that country Gentlemen should stand up and endeavour to prevent Her Majesty's Ministers from opening the ports, to preserve the people from starvation. ["No, no!"] Gentlemen might deny it, but it was true. There was every reason to apprehend a state of anarchy in Ireland, unless food were provided for its inhabitants. The Government had already adopted precautionary measures, and he gave them great credit for what they had done. He was astonished at the doctrines laid down by the country Gentlemen in their speeches, after they were divested of all their mystifications and verbiage. They had said, in effect, "The land is ours, and we have a right to do as we like with our own; we have a territorial Constitution; we have a right to govern you; for we have fed you, and employed you, and you are much better off than the serfs of Russia or Poland; and what have you to complain of?" But how have you governed the people? How have you fed them? How have you employed them, and what is their condition? You have undertaken to feed the people, but you are determined that they shall be fed only at your price; that they shall receive their food from you, and not from foreigners." He believed they would altogether prevent foreign corn coming here, if they dared; as it was, they had made a law to make corn dear and scarce, in order that they might keep up their own rents and incomes. That was the real object for which the Corn Laws were now supported. He had heard a great deal of cant about regard for the working classes, about their being benefited by these laws, and what a horrible thing it would be if the agricultural labourers were thrown out of employment. This appeared to be very charitable and humane; but who employed these labourers? It was an undeniable fact that there were fewer labourers employed in agriculture in 1841 than in 1821. This was his assertion: let the protectionists disprove it if they could. The population of Great Britain had increased four millions since 1821: who then had employed and fed this increased number? And if foreign corn had to be imported to feed them, who paid for it? The hon. Member for Wiltshire had stated that every quarter of wheat cost 25*s.* in labour. Taking the annual consumption of wheat at 20,000,000 of quarters, this at 25*s.* a quarter—the alleged cost of the labour—amounted to 25,000,000*l.*, a sum equal to the wages of all the agricultural labourers in the kingdom. Now, according to documents laid before the House, there were only about 1,200,000 agricultural labourers in Great Britain in 1841; and taking the hon. Member's own estimate, that the wages averaged 8*s.* per week, the annual amount would be only 25,000,000*l.* How then was it possible that the labour employed in cultivating wheat should cost 25*s.* per quarter? The protectionists had themselves estimated their protection at 20,000,000*l.* a year—he contended it was much more—and they

complained that the right hon. Baronet, now that he was doing one of the noblest acts of his life, was only giving them a compensation of 200,000*l.* But if the protection had been 20,000,000*l.* a year on wheat only, those who paid it had paid the wages of every agricultural labourer in England. During the thirty years the Corn Laws had been in operation, 600,000,000*l.* sterling had thus been taken from the community; and it was the people who ought to ask for compensation for being thus deprived of their rights. The Corn Law was unjust and inhuman, and it had been proved over and over again to be impolitic. It was asserted that cheap food would reduce wages; if so, dear food ought to be accompanied with high wages. The hon. Member for Westmoreland had said, that along with the removal of this protection, Government ought to reduce the duties on sugar, tea, tobacco, and coffee, by which the working classes would be exceedingly benefited. If so, would they not benefit from a reduction in the price of bread? The increase in the price of food in the last twelve months had made a difference of 1,000,000*l.* a year to the people of Lancashire. He was convinced this law could not be maintained on any principle, either of justice, humanity, or sound policy. The more agriculture was protected, the more it was weakened; the best protection to native industry was the extension of our foreign commerce; and the best protection to agriculturists was the prosperity of their customers. Let there be a good foreign trade, and agriculture was sure to prosper. What gave its value to land? Nothing but the extended market, at home and abroad, for our manufactured products. The agriculturists had been enabled to buy cheap manufactures, while they sold their corn dear; corn was as dear now, or nearly so, as in 1815—at least it was so a year or two ago. With all the boasted improvements in agriculture, for a series of years, corn had been at the same price as it was when the Corn Laws were enacted. Manufactures, on the other hand, had gone on increasing in quantity and in reduction of price; so that, while in 1815 a piece of calico would purchase three bushels of corn, it would now only buy three-quarters of a bushel. Thus, cheap manufactures were given for dear corn; and that was what the protectionists called the best market, and they said the home customers were the best. The fact was, the country was giving the agriculturists 25,000,000*l.* a year, that they might expend some portion of it in manufactures, and that was a very pretty way of making them into good customers. Therefore, so far from the landed interest being entitled to compensation, the commercial interest had a much better claim to it, for the injustice they had suffered. The hon. Member for Finsbury had spoken of the new law of settlement to be introduced by Government; and there had been great cheering among the protectionists, as if the manufacturing interest would oppose it. He (Mr. Brotherton) had already expressed his conviction that the measure was one of humanity and justice, and it should have his support. Though some prejudice might exist against it in the manufacturing districts, he conceived it to be a measure of humanity, and, to a great degree, a measure of justice; if the agriculturists would only with a good grace abolish the Corn Laws. So far from the manufacturers opposing the plan, he believed they would accept it, and gave it their support. The Chairman of the Poor Law Union (Salford) with which he was connected, informed him that the guardians considered it a wise and humane measure, and they urged him to give it his support. He could easily conceive that its operation would be rather injurious than otherwise to the manufacturing interest; for in Ireland, where 4,000,000 of the population lived on potatoes, the prospect of gaining a permanent settlement here by five years' residence, would be a strong inducement to them to come over to this country; and it might have an effect upon the labour of this country. But he had no such fears; he thought it as great an error to apprehend any mischief to this country from the influx of Irish labourers seeking employment, as it was formerly to prohibit the importation of Irish corn into this country, lest land in England should be thrown out of cultivation. He should have liked the Government measure better, as a whole, if it had included an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws; that would have accomplished an end worthy of the great measure brought forward. But as the measure stood, he believed that, so far from its being injurious to the working classes, it would cause increased employment, a diminution of poverty, crime, and immorality, and would conduce to the general interest and happiness of the community.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER was induced to offer a few observations on a question in which he was much interested. He should,

indeed, take a very narrow view of the whole question if he were to oppose the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government, solely because they might materially affect those which he had the honour of representing in that House; but he opposed them because he regarded them —whether as applied to our agriculture, commerce, or manufactures—as injurious to the public interest. On these grounds, and taking also into account the compensation proposed by Her Majesty's Government, he was prepared to regard the measure as a whole, and to give his most cordial support to the Amendment proposed by his hon. Friend the Member for the city of Bristol. The hon. Gentlemen who spoke last complained that Members connected with the agricultural interest had mystified the subject before the House; but he must say that the mystification proceeded in a great measure from hon. Gentlemen who, instead of regarding the country as it existed, took a Utopian view of its commercial relations, and laid down principles which, in the present state of things, could not possibly be adopted with safety to the country. He should not follow the example of some Gentlemen who took part in the debate, by casting imputations on his right hon. Friends on the Treasury bench for the course they had thought proper to pursue. He would pass over the speeches uttered by his right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) when, at the head of a powerful Opposition, he had ejected the Whigs from office. He (Mr. Christopher) would also pass over the opinions expressed by the right hon. Baronet in 1842, when a material change in protective duties was made; when, though the principle of prohibition was abandoned, the principle of protection was recognised by the House. He would even pass over the more qualified expressions of his right hon. Friend in the last Session of Parliament, when the subject of the Corn Laws having been introduced, he stated that he looked forward to a period when we must return to what the political economists called sound principles of legislation on this matter; but, at the same time, laying it down as a principle, that it was imprudent and unwise to interfere with great interests, where large capital was expended—to interfere with persons who were tempted by the legislation of that House to regard protection as a part of the legislative system of the country. He had supported the right hon. Baronet on all questions, for nearly twenty years, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill and the present measure; and it was his desire, if possible, to submit, on this occasion, to the superior judgment of his right hon. Friend; but having listened attentively to his able speech, he could see no case whatever made out to justify so great and so sweeping a change as that recommended. The right hon. Gentleman had in his own opinion satisfactorily explained the principles on which he reconstructed his Cabinet; but it would have a most unfortunate effect on the country if right hon. Gentlemen and noble Lords having come into office on the principle of protecting the native industry of all classes, should suddenly abandon that principle. Such a course was calculated to make the country at large place no confidence in any public men. He considered a strong Government of great advantage. He also considered it of great advantage to the country to have the right hon. Baronet at the head of that Government. He had been so far trusted by that House, and the constituent body, that he was enabled, by the imposition of taxes, and regulations of the revenue, to relieve the country from difficulties, and bring it into a most prosperous state; but with all those advantages, he would much sooner see a weak Government, controlled by a powerful Opposition—he would sooner see any body of politicians in office, whose principles were steady and sincere, than statesmen whose system of legislation was of that weathercock character that it was impossible to say what a day, or even an hour, might bring forth. Considering both the time and the manner in which the present measure had been introduced, he regarded it as a fearful and hazardous experiment. He was convinced that even its authors were not prepared to say what would be its effect. As a hazardous experiment he should give the measure his most decided opposition. His right hon. Friend had laid down the position that, as a principle of legislation with regard to our commercial policy, all protective duties whatever were bad in principle, and ought to be abolished; and that no duties should be levied except for the purposes of revenue. But he must say that, whatever might be the object in levying duties, they must practically be protective in their operation to the extent to which they were levied. This was the case with regard to the duties recommended to the House. The right

hon. Baronet proposed to continue a duty of 10 per cent on the article of cotton, 10 per cent on woollen and metal articles, and 15 per cent on silk, the produce of foreign countries; and he proposed to abolish in the course of three years the duty on articles entering into competition with the agricultural produce of this country. If the Government intended to adopt the principle of levying duties only for the purposes of revenue, then the agricultural and manufacturing interests ought to be equally protected. The Government, to be consistent with the position laid down, should adopt the principle of the fixed duty advocated by the noble Lord (Russell), as an impost on foreign corn, and only abolish that duty when they had made up their minds to withdraw all protection from manufactures. The noble Lord the Member for South Lancashire, whose graceful language had the merit of clothing the dull dogmas of political economy in a more classic dress than that in which they were usually presented to the House—that noble Lord had laid down the just position, that the producer of corn in this country, and the manufacturer, should be exactly on the same footing. He said the only difference between them was, that the one manufactured corn, and the other cotton. But if the earth be the machine by which corn was manufactured, it was stubborn in its character, and not so easily managed as that employed in the manufacture of cotton. There was another most important matter for consideration—the great difficulties with which the manufacturer of corn had to contend. The farmer was obliged to cultivate his land with care, with skill, and with assiduity. He was obliged to guide all his operations in such a way as fully to be able to contend and to compete with those who were engaged in the same business. He could not regulate the supply so as to meet the demand; whereas the manufacturer in wool, in cotton, or in articles of a similar description, could. The cotton manufacturer could ascertain the exact state of the market, and could regulate the supply in proportion to the demand. He had, therefore, reason to complain that the right hon. Baronet was sparing in his encouragement of the manufacture of corn—of encouragement to those interests which hitherto the Legislature had felt it its duty to protect, but from which now all protection was to be taken away. He thought that the agricultural interests, even on the pure principles of free trade, had reason to complain; for while the right hon. Baronet was about to take away all protection from land, by removing the duties on the agricultural produce of foreign countries, yet the landowner was not to be allowed to cultivate his own land so as to insure the most amount of profit. They were prevented from cultivating tobacco; whereas, from what he had seen in Germany, he was convinced that in the county which he had the honour to represent, many thousand acres might be profitably employed in the cultivation of tobacco. They were still to protect their Colonies—they had their differential duties remaining, and no attempt had been made to alter the relative amount of those duties, and no attempt was to be made to relax the principle of the differential duties. He had seen beet-root for the manufacture of sugar grown to a large extent in France; and he was sure that the fertile soil of the county which he represented might be profitably employed in its production. He did not wish to detain the House by entering into the details of this measure, but he wished to make one allusion. The right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government, for the purpose of placing the agricultural interest of this country on a different footing from the manufacturing interests, offered them, as an inducement to agree to such a sweeping, and in his mind injurious, change, certain proposals in the way of compensation. He regretted that he (Sir R. Peel) made use of that expression in introducing this measure, because, if the measure were right in itself, and were one which ought to be acceptable to the country, he repudiated the principle of compensation. If the measure were right in itself, there ought to be no compensation. He proposed, in the first place, that Gentlemen who had settled estates should have the opportunity of going before the Commissioners of Land Revenue, and of borrowing money at a low interest. He believed that such a proposal as that would be totally inefficient. In the first place, if Gentlemen were in a condition to go to their bankers, persons from whom they might receive accommodation, they would infinitely prefer doing so, to laying their title-deeds before a public board. Persons who knew the nature of landed property, and persons who, like himself (Mr. Christopher) knew what a Chancery suit was, knew better than to place their title-deeds under the glance of any public officer. He

thought on that ground that any compensation of that kind was inefficient. The right hon. Baronet also proposed to alter the law of settlement: he proposed that all persons who create a settlement by residence for a certain period in the manufacturing districts should not, as now, be removed to rural parishes. That might be a good measure in itself, though he would not be a supporter of it. His hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, stated, that he knew perfectly well that there were a great many hand-loom weavers who found work in Coventry and Nottingham; and he doubted whether they would confer any great benefit on that portion of the community by such a step. He was willing to regard this measure as beneficial with regard to the law of settlement, and he was willing to give it so far his entire support; but, in doing so, he felt bound to say that it would be no great boon to the agricultural interest, as he could show that though not the ultimate, yet, the immediate effect of it would be to inflict a severe, and, he was afraid, a lasting injury on the agricultural interests; and even if they took their view of the proposed law in the most favourable light, it would only afford a prospect of further evil. His right hon. Friend, in stating his entire measure of compensation, said, that it was the intention of the Government to consolidate parishes, for the purpose of improving the internal communication of the country. The internal communication of the country he admitted to be very defective. No person had complained of it more than he; but he could not consider the measure as any compensation for an immediate evil; it would be no compensation as far as relief to the poor went; and he doubted if it would not inflict a great injury on them, though it might improve the internal communication of the country. Now, with regard to the highways in England. Was it not notorious, whether right or wrong, that those highways, at that moment, formed, the means of relieving and maintaining numbers of sickly persons, who from infirmity of body and weakness in health were unable to obtain subsistence in field-labour? The right hon. Baronet would perhaps wish to sweep all these poor persons into the workhouses; but those who were employed on these highways were persons who were under that age which entitled them to poor-law outdoor relief. They were in a state of humble independence, not forced to seek relief from the workhouse or from any local fund. But the moment they employed a district surveyor, who would be guided by a class of inflexible economists, those persons must seek parochial relief, and, if under the age of sixty, they must be sent to the workhouse, so that when they lowered one rate they increased the other. So far from being a relief to those poor persons, he apprehended that this measure would tend materially to inflict an additional injury. He came now to another part of the question, and he wished to take a practical view of it—he wished to see what would be the probable effect of this measure on the agricultural population of this country. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that there need be no apprehension that the shipping interest would be affected; for this reason, that a great quantity of corn would come from foreign countries, and consequently more shipping would be employed, and a benefit would be derived by this measure; but at the end of his speech, alluding to the effect which it would have on the agricultural interests, he said that it would have no great effect on that interest, for his right hon. Friend asked, where was the foreign corn to come from? If the shipping interest would be benefited by the importation of all this corn that was to come from foreign countries, he should like to know on what grounds the Chancellor of the Exchequer could say that the agricultural interest would not be injured for the same reason. And if there were no corn to come in, how, he would like to know, could the shipping interest be benefited? He could refer to documents on this subject, but that he did not wish to weary the House. He could not look upon this measure in any other light than one which would cheapen labour by bringing foreign produce into competition with their own. It might cheapen food; but the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last on the other side of the House, said, that though no farmer himself, yet, from his acquaintance with those who were concerned in agricultural operations, he fancied that they had nothing to do but to sow the seed and to reap the produce. But it should be recollected that now-a-days skill, science, and chemestry, were employed in the advancement of agriculture in this country. A great many improvements had, of late, been introduced that were unknown six-

teen years ago. It was in consequence of the application of science, he believed, that the people of England were now in a better condition—in a better state, with regard to their supply of food, than any other nation. He found that though there was famine in all other parts of Europe there was no famine here. At this moment the average price of corn was under 54*s.* per quarter, notwithstanding all the different plans that were resorted to in towns for the purpose of raising the average price. In his own county the average price was 51*s.* The foreigner could bond his corn at very little more cost than any of his tenants would be liable to for sending a portion of their agricultural produce into Lancashire. But to give a practical proof, he would quote the average price of wheat for the following years in England and Dantzic :—

Years.	England.	Dantzic.
	s. d.	s. d.
1836	48 6	28 7
1837	55 10	29 0
1838	64 7	49 0
1839	70 8	53 0
1840	66 4	52 0
1841	64 4	52 6
1842	57 3	53 0
1843	50 1	39 0
1844	51 3	
1845 11 months	50 10	26 6

An eminent corn merchant told him, that he cleared a large cargo of excellent wheat under 40*s.* when the average price in England was 50*s.* 10*d.*, and that he had actually purchased wheat at 26*s.* 6*d.* Whether the effect of the measure would be to make food cheap he would not say ; of one thing he was certain, that by the introduction of such large quantities of grain from foreign countries so much labour would be displaced, as to throw a vast quantity of land out of cultivation, and a number of people out of employment. Mr. Deacon Hume, in his evidence before the Import Duties Committee, a gentleman of intelligence, and an excellent judge as to all that related to the produce of foreign countries, was asked—

"Do you think the production of corn in this country would be diminished?—I think the production of corn in certain parts which have been forced into corn cultivation would be diminished, but not otherwise. You do not think the soil would cease to be used?—No, I believe that the rents of lands, generally speaking, in this country would gradually increase, in consequence of the greater demand for labour creating a greater demand and ability to pay for fresh or green vegetable food, and especially for animal food. Have you formed an estimate of the quantity of corn that would be imported under your proposed tariff, one year with another?—Taking all kinds of corn and meal, I estimate that we should receive at least from eight to ten millions of quarters every year. Do you think, in consequence of that increased population and wealth, the population of this country might consume an increased quantity of imported corn, without diminishing the demand for the agricultural produce of our own country? —I think so, taking all kinds of agricultural products. In the course of ten years you would want at least ten millions of quarters of grain additional, if you were to produce as much as you have done in the last six years in the United Kingdom ; but then you would not produce so much, but you would change a great deal of the land into grazing and culinary vegetable land. Ten millions appears to be a great quantity to introduce into the population we have ; but it is but little more than the third of a quarter to each individual. When I made out this, I allowed one-fourth less per individual of bread to the population of this country than to France."

The inference, then, was clear and palpable, that by this free-trade measure a great deal of land would be changed into grazing from arable, and diminish not only the amount of labour, but also injure the land ; for it was well known to any tyro in agricultural science, that land once turned into pasture, would take a considerable time before it could be brought again to that state in which it was, before broken up. He hoped he had not wearied the House. He endeavoured to the utmost of his power to argue the proposed system on its own merits. He conscientiously believed, that if the measure so suddenly introduced by the right hon. Baronet were carried into effect, it would be most injurious to every interest which existed in the country, whether it was the manufacturing or the agricultural interest—it would affect trade of every description. He opposed the measure because he did not like to see a number of his fellow countrymen thrown out of employment. He did not like even to see men of small property but of ancient family, who maintained an honest independence, and who were anxious to maintain and educate their families as they were maintained and educated themselves, reduced in their means ; but he principally opposed the measure because of the injury it would inflict on the humbler classes of society. Having, therefore, after mature deliberation, come to that conclusion, he was resolved to give it his most decided and unqualified opposition.

Mr. CARDWELL said, although it

was his misfortune to differ from his hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Mr. B. Denison), and the hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. Christopher), in the vote he was about to give, it was by no means necessary that he should differ from all the positions they had laid down. On the contrary, it would be his duty, in the few observations he should submit to the House, frequently to insist on many of those positions on which they seemed to lay the greatest weight, and to press, as he thought, he might justly press, into the service of his argument, many facts and illustrations which they had thought it expedient to employ. To his honourable Friend the Member for the West Riding he had no difficulty in admitting that our agriculture had continually gone on improving with the increase of the population of this mighty Empire, or that, although there had been a continuous relaxation of our protective system, although the ordinary prices of agricultural produce were now much lower than they were at the commencement of the century, yet that agriculture, nevertheless, was in a better and an improved condition. Nor, would it be necessary for him to dispute that, with the variations of the harvest, the prosperity of the country had varied. The first and most obvious result of a bad harvest was, of course, the scarcity of food; and it would be quite inconsistent with the argument he was about to urge, to contend that the general prosperity of the country had not varied in proportion to the scarcity or the abundance of the supply of food. As, therefore, it was not necessary for him to dispute these positions, or the position of the hon. Member who spoke last—that the population had been increasing and were now better supplied than formerly, he would endeavour to derive from them the illustrations and corroborations of his own argument. But as he had never enjoyed the opportunity on any former occasion of expressing an opinion on the subject of the Corn Laws, perhaps he might be excused if he ventured shortly to state the grounds which induced him to give his cordial support to this measure for their final adjustment. His hon. friends who represented the agricultural interest would think it eminently uncandid in him, if he did not admit, that on this, as on other occasions, they had rested the strength of their case, not on the protection it afforded to a particular interest, but on the general advantage it was supposed to confer upon all classes of this great community. Well, it was on this ground that he desired to meet them; and most unworthy should he be to enter in that House upon so great an argument, if, dealing with the general welfare of the community, he did not recognise among the very first and most important objects of consideration the welfare of that great interest which those Gentlemen so zealously and in many respects so creditably supported. The arguments on which they rested their case were great arguments, and were urged as became men who felt that they had a great weight to sustain. They said the existing measure of protection had maintained us independent of supply from foreign nations; that it had given us security, under which capital was cheerfully invested for the improvement of domestic agriculture; that it had ensured to the farmer a remunerating price; and, above all, that it had provided for the ordinary labourers of the rural districts in England a protective rate of wages. Now, he would ask them when they used the words "independent of foreign nations" to think, for one moment, what was the practical significance of the language they employed. Did they remember that this country exported annually no less than 50,000,000*l.* of our native manufactures? Were they aware that fully two-fifths of the imperial revenue was derived from taxes on foreign imports? Did they recollect the history of former periods? Did they not know that it was the expanding energy of the cotton manufacture that sustained them in the deadly contest of the last war? Did they not know that towards the close of that war they were at the same time in collision with America and France; and had they forgotten that at the same period they were indebted for their cotton to America, and for their corn to France? Why "independent of foreign nations?" Had they learnt no lesson from the distress of 1842? To what was it owing? Not to our dependence on foreign nations for the supply of food, for we had on the Statute Book the law which was to preserve our independence. It was owing to the falling-off of the demand of our foreign customers for the export of our manufactures that our traders became involved in difficulty, and our labourers in a state almost amounting to starvation. The right hon. Gentleman who preceded his right hon. Friend as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had found it impossible to remedy the

effects produced upon the Treasury by the falling-off in our imports of foreign produce. But if, then, we were thus dependent upon foreign nations, in every sense in which one free nation could be dependent on another, were we less dependent upon them for the article of corn than for any other article? Hon. Members seemed to make light of the fact, that the gross imports of foreign corn for home consumption had amounted of late years to the steady average of 2,000,000 of quarters, or about 10 per cent. of the whole quantity of corn consumed in England. If that were so, if that was the average importation of corn, he said it was not using language according to its ordinary signification, it was little better than a play upon words, to say that the existing law preserved this country independent of foreign nations. Then as to the security under which it was said capital was cheerfully invested for the improvement of our native agriculture: he put it to hon. Gentlemen who urged this argument, whether living under free institutions, they did not know that when a great and growing sentiment was opposed to an existing law, and public opinion had set in against it, there must necessarily be uncertainty and difficulty respecting it? Now, what was our position? He knew that every eminent writer in the science of political economy—he believed that every individual in that House, on whom the responsibility of giving counsel to Her Majesty had ever been imposed, was opposed upon principle to the maintenance of protection. What was the case with the country at large? He would put it to every hon. Gentleman who heard him, to say whether, in the actual state of things, there did not exist throughout England a great and growing sentiment which opposed itself to the existing Corn Laws? There was no man acquainted with popular feeling who could doubt that the tide of public opinion had set in against a system which had occasioned so much difficulty and uncertainty. What was the state of the question in the House of Commons? Almost every individual who advanced an opinion on the subject was, at least, upon principle, opposed to protection; while, in the country at large, the evidence was much stronger upon this point. The manufacturing interest was universally opposed to it; if his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Liverpool were in his place, he should not hesitate to say before him that the commercial interest was generally opposed to it; and, he would ask, was even the agricultural interest unanimous on the subject? Were there not many amongst that body who adopted the opinions of the late Lord Spencer and the present Lord Grey? Had not the hon. Member for Northamptonshire told them that he never thought protection could be permanent? And had not many hon. Members on that side of the House said, while objecting to a particular provision of the scheme, that what the British farmer chiefly wanted was, to be placed in a position of security against further change? If such was the case, could they seriously and confidently maintain, that if they succeeded in their present proposition, that they would go down to their respective estates and invite the farmers of England to come forward and take long leases under the security of the existing law? [Mr. CHRISTOPHER: No.] The hon. Member for Lincolnshire said "No." But that was the test. If the landlord would not offer, nor the tenant accept, leases on the faith of the existing law, what became of the security it was supposed to afford? If the farmer would not take leases under the present law, he should like to know where was the security for the investment of capital? But they also said that the present law ensured to the farmer a remunerating price. Now, he would at once admit to them, that if they could keep as it was the cost of production—and if, while the demand was increasing, they could limit the supply, the law which effected these results would secure them a remunerating price. But they on the other hand must not refuse to admit to him, that if he could diminish the cost of production, and could so readjust the balance of demand and supply, that while the supply increased, the demand should more greatly and rapidly increase, a twofold benefit would be attained for agriculture, and that the abolition of the law would have done more than the maintenance of it in ensuring a remunerating price. Lest it might be said that these were mere hypotheses, he would call into court a most unexceptionable witness. If any one doubted that the cost of production would be diminished, he would recommend him to read the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire on the Tariff of 1842, when he complained of the hardship of exposing the British farmer to competition with his foreign rival, because he showed that every other article being protected, it

exposed him to the difficulty of competing with the foreign farmer at a disadvantage of cent per cent; and he would call him as a witness, whether by the relaxation of protective duties the cost of production would not be materially diminished? Well, but how stood the other portion of his case, the balance of demand and supply? In the autumn of 1843, it was the first symptom of reviving trade in Manchester that there was suddenly an increased demand for inferior joints of meat. That demand for the produce of land, for the necessaries of life, had increased with improving trade: now what was the increase of supply? The hon. Member for Somersetshire had furnished a remarkable illustration of the argument, for he adverted to the fact that during the past half-year there had been an average falling-off of 16,000 sheep a week in the London market. Now he would ask him, under that Tariff, from which he once had augured so much evil, how many sheep had been imported into this country in the last twelve months to supply the rapidly increasing demand? Why, in the whole twelve months the foreign supply had not made up for the average deficiency of a single week. These, then, were the elements of his problem: the present price of butchers' meat was the natural and obvious solution. Well, but if the existing law did not maintain their independence of the foreigner: if it could not be relied on as a security for the investment of capital: if it appeared that relaxation, rather than restriction, had operated for the enhancement of price; yet there was a part of the case remaining which was most important, and on which he did his agricultural friends the justice to acknowledge, that they laid the greatest stress. They said that the existing law secured to the labourer in the rural districts a protected rate of wages; and in the course of the debate an hon. Member expressed his wonder that the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, with the case of the silk weavers in his mind, could have ventured to propose a relaxation in the existing Tariff. Now, the effect of protection upon wages was precisely that part of the case on which he wished to meet his hon. friends; and he asked no better illustration than the instance of the silk trade would afford. Whenever an article was produced merely by hand labour, no doubt as competition increased there must be a great adverse incidence on the scale of wages; but when they cheapened an article by the increase of capital and machinery, it did not follow that the price of wages must be lowered. The prices of manufactured articles had been reduced by improvements in manufacture, till a penny stood where a shilling stood before; and yet the average rate of wages had not fallen, while the numbers of those employed in the production had rapidly and steadily increased; and the cause was obvious. New markets had been opened that did not exist before. Countless peoples of the earth who could not deal with us at the shilling, were thankful to be our customers at the penny; and thus there was an increased stimulus given to trade, a greater application of capital, and greater improvement of machinery. Again, by reciprocity of action, this improvement further reduced the price, and so more widely increased the market. Thus, they were perpetually enlarging the basis of the trade on which the operative at home depended. But while they enlarged, they also increased greatly its security. For as we became dependent on a greater number of customers, our dependence on any one became less and less important. Now let them consider the effect of this progression upon their American and German rivals. Not having our capital, our improvements, our energy, our start, they would be at a disadvantage, and you beat them in the neutral market. But if you beat them in the neutral market, could they long sustain the competition even in their own markets? If they did, it could only be effected by a constantly increasing Tariff. In other words, the agriculturist in Germany and America must be content to submit to a constantly increasing burden. Well, but if so, he must constantly compete at a greater and greater disadvantage with his hon. Friends who represented the agriculturist of England. Now this was the history of hostile tariffs. Had he not then furnished the reply to that challenge so ostentatiously thrown out—had he not shown that hostile tariffs could be met and be defeated by free imports? that one was a continual course of progress, the other a perpetual retrogression? Well, now, an hon. Member had suggested the case of Russia, and had said that Russia would send into this country annually 5,000,000 quarters of grain, for which she would not receive our manufactures, but would compel us to pay in gold. He supposed that hon. Member had forgotten that Russia was a country producing gold, and England not; for he might just as well have imagined

that Middlesex would pay Lancashire for its manufactures, or Northumberland for its cattle, by sending coals to Wigan or Newcastle. Russia might, it was true, decline directly to receive our manufactures. She might force us to a circuitous trade; we might, as the hon. Member had suggested, have to pay for imports from Russia by the purchase of bills upon Brazil. No doubt it was advantageous to obtain reciprocity, by which the expense of this circuitous trade was saved, and double benefits secured. But suppose Russia to refuse reciprocity, what would be the consequence to herself? That dealing with us not directly, but by way of Brazil, she would drive a smaller trade and at a smaller rate of profit; that she would sell cheaper and buy dearer than she need. There was no want of intelligence in Russia; and we might reasonably expect that Russia would perceive the advantage to be derived from the adoption of a direct rather than a circuitous trade. There was another argument derived from the peculiar burdens alleged, and he thought to a certain extent truly alleged, to be imposed on land. He did not think it was necessary to enter upon that subject at much length. He did not, however, mean to decline it: on the contrary, he was ready to admit, that a claim of that kind ought to be fairly looked into, and that a protected interest, burdened because of its protection, had, when that protection was removed, an irresistible claim to have its burdens fully inquired into and considered, and, if proved, relieved. No one wished to dispute that proposition; but what he contended for was, that the landed interest had no right to say, "We are a burdened interest," which was a very convenient argument for protection; and then to say also, "In spite of you, we will remain a burdened interest, in order that we may maintain our protection." Such a conclusion could not be admitted; and he hoped that it would not be attempted to be supported. He had now gone cursorily over the main argument used by hon. Gentlemen near him; and, if his memory did not failhim, he had not omitted any one main argument except what was called the colonial argument. He had put the case of our independence of foreign supply—he had put the case of security for an advance of capital—he had put the case of securing fair and remunerative prices—he had put the case of giving the labourers an increased rate of wages; and he had endeavoured to show that, by increasing the amount of labour in our great manufactures, they had raised the rate of wages from 8*s.*, 12*s.*, or 15*s.*, to something like 30*s.* or 40*s.* He had shown that population and wealth had increased by the process he had described, and asked hon. Members to draw the inference that, with wages of 30*s.*, a man would cause a greater demand for butchers' meat, for bread, and for the produce of agriculture generally, than the man who earned only 8*s.*, or 12*s.*, or 15*s.*; and he had asked them to believe that when by these increased wages the population was drawn from the agricultural districts, the rate of wages would naturally rise in those districts, and the condition of those who remained would be materially benefited: and, having touched also upon the argument of peculiar burdens, he was not aware that in the course of that long debate any considerable argument had remained unnoticed, except the colonial argument. Now, with respect to this colonial argument, he ventured to say that the position in which it was sought to put the Colonies had been, as he had always understood from Gentlemen interested in the cause of the Colonies, that they should be as dear to the British Crown and to the Parliament as Yorkshire or Middlesex; and it appeared to him to have been reserved for that debate to hear it deliberately maintained, that the course of policy to be pursued with respect to imperial interests should be made to subserve colonial interests. If they took a course which was beneficial to imperial interests, it would, except for special and exceptional reasons, be equally beneficial to colonial interests. The colonial argument was maintained by his gallant Friend the Member for Liverpool (Sir H. Douglas), and by the hon. Member for Roxburghshire (Mr. Scott); but in the course of that debate a speech had been made which he believed was considered by hon. Gentlemen as containing the most powerful argument, and claiming particular attention (Mr. Disraeli's). In that speech it was contended that the agricultural interest maintained the principle of moderate protection, or, as it was called, of "genuine free trade;" which descended from Mr. Pitt to Mr. Huskisson, and from Mr. Huskisson, until that particular juncture, to the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel.) But when he looked at the speech to which allusion had been made, and to former speeches of the same hon. Member, he found that hon. Gentleman dated what he was pleased to call this "genuine free trade" of Mr. Pitt to the

year 1787, after the loss of the American Colonies: and the distinction he drew was this, that up to 1787 the commercial policy of England had been hampered by her colonial system; but at that time, abandoning the colonial system, Mr. Pitt introduced a wider, a sounder, and a more statesmanlike view of the case: he adopted the same sentiments with respect to colonial as other interests—he adopted those principles of free trade, or moderate protection, which, the hon. Gentleman said, descended from him to Mr. Huskisson, and, till lately, to the right hon. Baronet; and if hon. Gentlemen sided with the high authorities of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Huskisson, and the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, he wanted to know what became of the gallant Member for Liverpool, and the hon. Member for Roxburgh, and the great colonial argument? If the principle were good for the mother country it was good for the Colonies, except under special and peculiar circumstances, and, logically speaking, the colonial must not be regarded as a different argument, but as another mode of stating the same thing. If, then, hon. Gentlemen's arguments were not so absolutely irresistible, and if their facts were not conclusive, he asked them to consider in what position they stood before the country. Were there no strong arguments against them? Were they not seeking to levy from the food of the people a tax, a very small portion of which went into the coffers of the Imperial Exchequer? Were they not setting up an arbitrary barrier in the way of the course of trade? Were they not seeking to deprive the industrious classes of the obvious advantage of disposing of their own produce at their own discretion? And could they overcome objections of this kind, except by arguments the most powerful, and facts the most conclusive? He had avoided troubling them with statistics. Let him read to them a single extract, for he wished to show that these were not cant doctrines of some modern school; and the paragraph he held in his hand was classical authority, for it was taken from a great writer, whom he was glad to find his hon. Friends at length had learned to quote. Adam Smith said—

"All systems either of preference or of restraint, therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men. The Sovereign is completely discharged from a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or knowledge could ever be sufficient—the duty of superintending the industry of private people, and of directing it towards the employments most suitable to the interests of society."

An illustration had occurred to his own mind in connexion with a different subject, which, if he were permitted, he would mention to the House. A distinguished man, himself a conspicuous defender of his country in the late war, had recently been made Chairman of the Commission appointed to inquire into our Maritime Defences. That gallant Admiral, referring to the progress of steam navigation, had said to him the other day—"You will be told that your ancient securities have failed you; that you can no longer rely on the wooden walls of Old England for your defence, and you will be told the truth. Your ancient securities have failed you; but don't be afraid of the march of improvement; keep pace with it; it will supply you with new and better securities. In an instant of time one modern invention will tell you which is the place of danger; in an hour another modern invention will concentrate on the point of attack the disposable forces of an empire. You were an extended country; you have become a fortified citadel." Now, this was applicable to the political and social, no less than to the military condition of the country. Let him say to his agricultural friends—and he declared he would not be found advocating that great change unless he believed that he might truly say—"Don't be afraid of the march of improvement; it has deprived you of your ancient securities, your independence of the foreigner, your security for capital, your Parliament price, your protective rate of wages. It has given you new and better securities, the expanding energies of trade, the multiplied capacities of production, the stimulated powers of consumption, the ever-growing demand of a great and increasing people. You have ceased to be an extended country; you have become an urban community—what the hon. Member for Shrewsbury had eloquently called them, the metropolis of the world." They would find, therefore, that in this country the interests of agriculture and of commerce, when rightly considered, depended upon the same principles, and would be promoted by the same measures. He would trouble the House with

only a very few statistical statements; but did they know what was going on around them? were they aware of the increase of agricultural demand arising from an increase of population and an increase of employment in the manufacturing districts? Let him take Mr. Porter's statement of the increase in the valuation for county rates in the manufacturing towns. He was aware that there had been a different mode of making the assessment; but this return did, nevertheless, contain substantial proof of the progress in those districts. He would take the valuation of 1815, and compare it with the valuation of 1841 :—

"Valuation made for County Rates in the Townships which now constitute the boroughs of Manchester and Salford :—

	Manchester.	Salford.
1815 ...	353,376 ...	918,397
1829 ...	495,997	
1841 ...	1,022,055 ...	2,703,292
Increase	189 per cent.	194 per cent."

If that were the increase in the value of property in those towns assessed to the county rates between 1815 and 1841, let him read an extract from a return made by Mr. Horner, the Inspector of Factories, in the present Session of Parliament :—

"Since the last return to Parliament in February, 1839, there has been an increase in my district of 529 factories, of 10,041 horses' power, and of 50,522 persons employed."

He would ask hon. Members then to work out with him an arithmetical calculation, and see what quantity of butchers' meat and what quantity of wheat these 50,000 persons employed at a high rate of wages would necessarily consume. Could it be doubted that very much of the improvement in the agricultural districts must result from this increased demand? Mr. Horner went on to say—

"This increase has all taken place since November, 1842, when the revival of trade began; and indeed the increase of persons employed since that time must have been considerably greater than the above amount; for between June, 1838, when the collection of particulars for the return of 1839 began, and November, 1842, many mills had entirely ceased to work, and others had considerably reduced the number of their hands. The total number of power looms in my district, ascertained by this inquiry, is 142,949. The only return of power looms made to Parliament is that of 1835; and I find from it, that in the same parts of England which now constitute my district, viz. Lancashire, part of the West Riding, and the whole of the North Riding of the county of York, and the four northern counties of England, there were then only 63,861; showing an increase of 79,088 in the ten years; and there are now 26,237 more power looms at work in my district alone than there were in the whole United Kingdom ten years ago."

He did appeal to the House, therefore, whether a statement of such facts was not a more pressing argument than any other facts or argument? In all these cases the rate of wages was generally high; but what was the experience of Mr. Howell with respect to the silk trade, and how were the workmen practically affected in the settlement of these questions?—

"Throughout the entire district general scarcity of hands is noticed, and a consequent rise of wages. In the silk districts particularly, hands are very scarce."

Let them observe how the sound interests of trade subserved the interests of humanity better than any mistaken legislation :—

"And I have been informed that instances are not wanting where children working half time have got as much wages, and in some cases it is said that they got more than they did when they worked ten hours; but I am told that a rise also has taken place in the wages of those who now work ten and twelve hours respectively."

This was not confined to Manchester or to Salford; but if they went to Preston or to any other district, they would see that the course which had been pursued had been everywhere attended with the same results. He must here refer to a remarkable speech lately made at a meeting of the Town Council of Liverpool by the Chairman of the Dock Committee; and he hoped the hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Liddell), who had made a complaint of the injury likely to be done to the shipping interest, was in the House, that he might have the benefit of this statement. The chairman stated—

"Surprise has been expressed in the council when an increase of 100,000 tons was talked of some time since; but I have not now to deal with an increase of 100,000 tons, but with an increase of hundreds of thousands. In the dock financial statement of the 24th June, 1845, which was the end of the financial year, the increase was 383,819 tons over the preceding year. The increase in six months from June to the 31st December last, exceeded that of any previous period, inasmuch as it showed an increase of 600 vessels and 209,409 tons over the corresponding six months of the previous year. . . . The increase in the East India trade has been about 20 per cent, and the increase in the United States and western trade has been about 30 per cent."

That was where there had been hostile tariffs. The chairman went on to say—

"I may also state, that in proportion as we afford increased dock accommodation, in the same proportion shall we draw trade to the port. Suppose that at no distant period—which I dare say will be the case—we were to have modified rates of duties on various other foreign productions (which he specified), which are at present virtually excluded by a high and impolitic tariff; when the duties are so reduced, it is not in the power of man to divine what accommodation will be required in a port like Liverpool. Liverpool will

stand in the pre-eminent position of possessing 203 acres of docks and basins, with about fifteen miles of quay space."

It would be presumptuous in him to express in the House of Commons his sanguine anticipations of the great and growing increase in the commercial and manufacturing districts with which he had the honour to be connected; but he might cite this business speech made to business men, and to declare with this speaker the truth that "it is not in the power of man to divine the increase of accommodation which will be required." [Mr. Liddell: What of the timber trade?] He had not intended to trouble the House with any statement on that subject; but as the hon. Member wished it, he would read one from the same speech. Mr. B. Moore said—

"One fact connected with the timber trade will show its importance to the country, and that is, that there are more artificers above eighteen years of age employed in the different ramifications of the timber trade, than in any other single trade that can be mentioned."

He would first give the results of the recent changes as they affected the North American trade. [Mr. Liddell: The Baltic trade, not the Canada.] He would give the Baltic trade also. The argument the other evening was, that all the increase of trade had gone to the Baltic, and that there was no increase in the Canada trade. Now, hon. Members should have the facts whichever way they liked. He would show a concurrent increase in both trades, and he really did not know in which there had been the most satisfactory progress. First, however, let him refer to the increase in British America.

Years.	Vessels.	Tonnage.
1838	305	160,415
1839	339	170,591
1840	230	133,400
1841	318	174,948
1842	165	91,179
1843	311	154,518
1844	369	189,414
1845	453	239,854

And next let him take the same years with respect to the trade with the Baltic:—

Years.	Vessels.	Tonnage.
1838	72	22,788
1839	58	17,415
1840	48	14,000
1841	40	11,923
1842	33	11,239
1843	61	17,253
1844	51	14,144
1845	113	33,792

He was very much obliged to his hon. Friend for the interruption, and to the House for the kindness with which it had listened to these statistics. He was glad to see that the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Hudson) had just entered the House, and he wished to disabuse his mind of a fallacy which appeared to pervade it. He had already alluded, in the absence of the hon. Member to the fallacy of the effect upon imports of corn and of the payment of Russia in gold. The hon. Member—and no one had more right to say it—said that he could make railways enough if we did not send our money abroad for the purpose of buying corn. Let him tell that hon. Member that, while he had been prosecuting his successful enterprizes, there had been an average each year of 2,000,000 quarters of corn imported, paid for not in gold sent to Russia, but by the exports of trade; and if the hon. Member would condescend to receive information from an humble individual like himself, he would venture to tell him the result of the proceeding was this:—his industrious navigators had derived great benefit from the 2,000,000 quarters of corn, and no doubt the profits made on the exports had been invested in his railway scrip, and had gone to sustain the prosperity of those useful undertakings. These conclusions, then, he verily believed, were based upon reasonings almost mathematical, and surrounded by the strongest buttresses of fact. These opinions he had always entertained: he had never disavowed, he had not attempted to disguise them; but he did not think that those who, in former years had voted against the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) ought to shelter themselves, under the plea that they had taken no part in the debate, from their equitable share of responsibility. He did not hesitate to say, that he had voted in former years against the hon. Member for Wolverhampton; but he had always thought that these great changes should be regarded by prudent men as questions of time. The hon. Member for Northamptonshire regarded this as a question of time; and why should not he be allowed so to regard it also? Could it be denied, then, that the present was a time at which it was essentially necessary to look out for a supply of food? There never was a time when the change could be made with so slight dislocation of existing interests. The word "compensation" had been invidiously imported into this debate; but he appealed to the House whether

that word had been employed by his right hon. Friend. But they would not deny that the measure was accompanied by important ones of another kind, conducive to good government, and which, as the opponents of this measure admitted, would confer great advantage on the country. Holding, as he always had, those abstract opinions, he was at perfect liberty to say, that this was a proper occasion for the adjustment of this question; and he did not admit that this Parliament was returned as a protective Parliament, and had no right to entertain it. There were hon. Members on that side of the House who never disguised opinions like those which he had endeavoured to express; and he ventured to say that a large portion of that great commercial interest in this country who had supported the Conservative party did not think that this Parliament was elected to maintain protection. The people of England were slow to learn from abstract reasoning, but were very quick to learn from practical experience; and without saying that this question turned on the experience of three years, he did say that the experience of the last three years, and the consequences of commercial relaxation, had not been lost upon that great and reflecting people whom they represented. He said that there was a large and important interest, whose support was essential to the Conservative party; and, without the slightest disrespect to the agricultural interest, of whom he should express his own feelings most untruly if he spoke otherwise than with the utmost respect, that commercial interest did expect a reasonable and constantly vigilant, and not unyielding, disposition to watch the ever-varying circumstances of this country in Parliament. He was persuaded that he was borne out by facts; and he did with perfect cheerfulness give his cordial support to this measure for the final adjustment of a great and complicated question, believing that in a due, generous, wide, and discriminating regard to all the complex interests of this country, they were a Parliament competent to decide upon this great question; and that if they decided it in the affirmative, they would confer upon the country most important benefits.

Mr. FINCH said, he addressed the House with considerable hesitation, because he knew how weary it must be after the long debate; but as his constituency was anxious that he should deliver his sentiments, he would, with the permission of the House, convey his ideas in a few words on the subject. The speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House, did great credit to his good taste, temper, and ability; but to him it seemed anything but a convincing speech, and would not, he thought, have much weight with the country. With respect to the glowing details of manufacturing prosperity which had been quoted, it seemed to him that it was entirely in favour of the other side of the question. Because, if trade and manufactures were flourishing to that degree, where was the necessity or propriety of interfering with them? They had become so under the protective system: then why change it? But when credit was given to the Tariff for being the cause of so much prosperity, he must beg leave to deny that position. His opinion was, that the prosperity would have been greater, if no change had been made in the Tariff. He had carefully noted the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman who had spoken on that side of the House—he had heard them taking credit for the beneficial effect of the relaxation in that system; but he had not seen any of them descend into the particulars, or trace effects to their cause. Several causes had coincided to establish that prosperity. America had been in a state of prostration, and its credit was at an end. Insolvency was spread throughout that country, and during that period there was, as a necessary consequence, the greatest possible distress in the manufacturing districts. The credit of America had revived, and with it trade and commerce—with the revival of trade and commerce credit sprung up; thence a fresh demand for manufactures, and from that time to the present our manufactures had prospered. Railway speculation and railway undertakings had contributed their quota to the general prosperity; they had given a great stimulus to industry, and had materially tended to increase consumption. It was going too far to say that all our prosperity was to be attributed to the Tariff. He defied any hon. Gentleman to say how any part was to be attributed to that measure; or, if they did succeed, it must be in a very trifling respect indeed. When he formerly sat in the House, his place was with the Conservative party on the Opposition benches. The noble Lord the Member for the city of London was then strongly in favour of protection: he was, as a Minister, a strong protectionist, and until a very late period the question

discussed between the leaders of the two parties was not protection or no protection, but as to the mode and degree of protection. The Government which then sat upon the side from which he spoke, advocated a fixed duty—the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) who sat opposite, a sliding-scale. A strange change had taken place. The only manner in which the sliding-scale had been maintained was—the right hon. Baronet sliding out of office—the noble Lord sliding in and out again—and the right hon. Baronet sliding in once more. The right hon. Baronet had thrown overboard his sliding-scale —the noble Lord his fixed duty. All were now agreed in free trade in corn; at least the Members of the present and of the late Government. It seemed as if a sort of moral murrain had broken out among the leading statesmen on both sides. He had great regard for the opinion of the right hon. Baronet; and he was told that of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), was held in great respect; but he must say that their conversions on this subject appeared to him not miraculous, but ludicrous. Whilst the right hon. Baronet had changed his opinion with railway speed, the noble Lord had changed his with the speed of an electric telegraph. Such convictions, if convictions they could be called, had no weight on him; it could have no weight on the minds of the people. If the right hon. Baronet had, like a noble and learned Lord who was the ornament of the other House of Parliament, retired to a beautiful and sequestered villa in the south of France, and there, surrounded with the best works on political economy, Malthus, Adam Smith, Ricardo, MacCulloch, MacGregor, and the works of all those which begun or ended with Mac—had calmly read and reflected, and at length arrived at a conclusion opposite to that which he had all his lifetime entertained; he could understand the converted statesman coming forward and expressing regret for his former error, storming the Cabinet, and grasping the seals of office; but the convictions of the right hon. Baronet and of the noble Lord had been, in his opinion, the result rather of circumstances than of reflection. There were many disturbing elements to interrupt the serenity of the right hon. Baronet's contemplation. There was the Anti-Corn-Law League from the boards of Covent-garden Theatre, thundering its anathemas against the Corn Laws—there were the visions of bloody battles and of hostile fleets in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean —in other words, there was the dread of an American war; then there was that unfortunate potato rot; and there was the hon. Member for Cork ready to discharge, at the first opportunity, his well-poised javelin at the head of the Minister, meditating no second stroke; then there was the rumour of the ports being thrown open, and the difference thereon, the Generalissimo of Her Majesty's Ministers going one way, and the Generalissimo of Her Majesty's Forces another; and, finally, those three counties to be inundated, not with water, but with voters. Under these circumstances, he could not be persuaded to think that the change in the opinions of the right hon. Baronet, was the result of calm reflection. But as for the noble Lord—he, having received information of the doubting and division in the Cabinet, and that the right hon. Baronet was directing his course towards free trade, wrote a letter from one of the Scotch lakes to the citizens of London, electrifying them and convulsing the kingdom with laughter. He thought this debate should be carried on with as little party feeling as possible, and was anxious to discuss it in a calm spirit. Some were anxious to overthrow the Corn Laws, because they thought that by that means they would inflict an injury on the clergy of the Established Church. Others were anxious to uphold them, because they wished to maintain the just influence of the clergy ; others were anxious to overthrow them, because they thought that by that means they would spread distrust and disaffection in the agricultural body, and so bring about an organic change. Others, again, who wished to maintain the Constitution, were desirous of protecting agriculture; they had stood side by side with them in the same battles, and were still willing to share in their adversity and in their triumph—they would not be bribed by the cry of cheap sugar and cheap bread. There was another class that wished to destroy the Corn Laws, that they might break up the agricultural party, and so shift upon the shoulders of the noble Lord the cares of the Empire, to which he thought the noble Lord was not equal. There was yet another body who wished to destroy the Corn Laws, because it would injure the aristocracy. This party was the weakest of all. They might as well enter into a confederacy to blow up the coal mines, because several of the aristocracy were proprietors thereof—destroy the city of Westminster, because some of them

lived there—or republicanize the Debt, or any other foolish and absurd project which had for its object the destruction of the mass, because the few were members of it. It was a mistake to say the aristocracy would be the chief sufferers by this measure. To the man of 100,000*l.* a year, it would make little difference one way or the other; it was the struggling industrious farmer, and the honest labourer, that would chiefly feel its pernicious effects. The noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire administered a most solemn lecture to the aristocracy; and he talked very eloquently of the fertility of the valleys, the depth of the woods, the extent of the plains, and the immense resources of America; but upon one subject he was perfectly silent—the American Corn Law. He thought the noble Lord was discreet in that silence; because if he had introduced the subject of the American Corn Laws, the whole speech would be so charged with ridicule, that he must have himself laughed outright. He had lately seen a letter from the American correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, in which was distinctly stated that the democracy of Philadelphia was adverse to free trade. Out of twenty-six of these democratic representatives, twenty-five were against any further relaxation in the Tariff. He hoped that the noble Lord had, before he left America, administered a solemn warning to the republicans, and told them how dangerous it was for democracy to rely upon exclusive privileges. He would make a few comments on the speech of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. He admitted that that speech was distinguished by tact, talent, and eloquence. Nobody else within the walls of that House could deliver such a speech. He was happy to see that, during the period which elapsed since he held a seat in that House, the mental powers of the right hon. Baronet had not declined. It must, however, be admitted that the commencement was rather ponderous—the right hon. Baronet was rather slow in getting upon the wing, and his flight was for some time heavy; but at length he became at once rapid and graceful. Wherever there was a weak point, he guarded it. He had voluminous documents about the potato rot, with which he fortified his most defenceless position—he caricatured the speeches of the agricultural members, and amused the House at their expense. Indeed, so great was the ingenuity of the right hon. Baronet, that he thought, if he liked, he could make the House very merry with his own former speeches. He terminated with a splendid peroration — in which he worked himself up to fever height, animated, indeed, to a high degree, but very far from that cool deliberate conviction that should characterize a British Minister—in which he recommended free trade to the utmost extent that could be wished for by hon. Gentlemen opposite, but he thought rather dangerous from a person in the high station of the right hon. Baronet. That was a brilliant peroration, and must be answered; but where could he find one to do so having the eloquence, weight, and experience of the right hon. Baronet? Well, but it must be answered; and he promised the House, before he sat down, to provide an answer—he did not mean that he would answer the right hon. Baronet himself, but he would get some one to answer him. But in the mean time, he must observe upon what he considered some weak points in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The right hon. Baronet said, that in consequence of the failure of the potato crop, they would be obliged to open the ports. He denied that. Then the right hon. Baronet said, the ports being open, the Corn Laws cannot be sustained. That was a complete *non sequitur*. It could be of no advantage whatever to the Irish peasant to open the ports. Wheat, at the time the opening of the ports was projected, was selling in the European markets at from 45*s.* to 50*s.* per quarter. Upon that rumour it rose to 50*s.* and 60*s.* How could the Irish peasant, who could not give 15*s.* a barrel for oats at his own door, send over here to buy wheat at 60*s.* a quarter? It was a perfect delusion—not one quarter of wheat would find its way to the distressed people of Ireland. But suppose the ports were open, why should they not be shut again? The League, it was true, said, Let the gates be once opened, and then shut them again if you can; but if the Order in Council had been issued, setting forth that the ports were to be open until the 1st of September and no longer, what could the League do to prevent them being shut, beyond raising a great clamour? Every instance the right hon. Baronet produced told against himself: he referred to the different periods in English history at which the ports had been thrown open, but in every one of these instances the Corn Laws had been continued. The right hon. Baronet said that the ports in Belgium and

Holland had been thrown open; but these would be the very last nations to abolish the Corn Laws. The right hon. Baronet said, the refusal to deal with the Corn Laws would increase the agitation tenfold. But what would be the consequence of the right hon. Baronet's measure? the agitation would be increased twenty-fold. The Leaguers would keep up and increase the agitation, and the agriculturists would agitate twenty-fold more than they had done. A man was not fit to be a British statesman unless he was clamour-proof. The English people were not much impressed by clamour: they were accustomed to it. He had heard an anecdote of a canary in France which was so accustomed to noise that at length it fired off a brass cannon without being at all frightened. If Ministers would thus yield to the clamour of the Anti-Corn-Law League, they would have plenty of other leagues—leagues for cheap religion, cheap Government, and cheap everything. If they yield to agitation, why not yield to the agitation for the Repeal of the Union in Ireland? That was quite new doctrine. If the right hon. Baronet had maintained his position and stood by his guns, he might not have feared anything; he would have had a majority in that House, and a majority out of doors. He was sure that if there were universal suffrage, and the votes of the people to be taken on this subject, there would be an immense majority in favour of the Corn Laws, and free trade would be thrown into the British Channel. The right hon. Baronet said, the prosperity of agriculture did not depend on the price of wheat. Had he (Mr. Finch) made use of such an assertion the farmers would have placed him in an iron cage, and exhibited him as a living curiosity. Every argument by which the right hon. Baronet attempted to prop up this theory was illusory. He took the aggregate rental of the country in 1815 and 1845, and, without allowing for the increase arising from steam power, water power, chemical science, and general improvements, the right hon. Baronet argued that, inasmuch as that aggregate rental was now four millions greater than in 1815, whilst the average price of wheat had fallen one-half, therefore the price of land was not dependent on the price of wheat. Then with regard to the silk trade, they were told by the right hon. Baronet that the French could not now excel us in the manufacture of silks; whereas it appeared that there were two kinds of silk manufacture, and formerly two different high protective duties on them. Since the alteration of those duties, the French had exported many hundreds of thousands of pounds a year of the best sorts, whilst our manufacture had only increased with respect to the worst sorts; and he had no doubt but that by the contemplated changes manufacture of the better sorts would be ruined altogether. Then, with regard to the shipowners. It appeared that there were conflicting opinions as the effect of the contemplated changes in the interests of shipowners. Some shipowners were of one opinion, some of another; but on the whole, there would be no doubt that the weight of evidence was against the change. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred last night to Mr. H. C. Chapman; and he could scarcely have related a more unfortunate witness, for he (Mr. Finch) found that that gentleman had addressed a letter to the *Morning Post*, in which he cited his own evidence as follows:—

"Question 1040—Corn is generally imported in foreign ships?—Yes. That is in consequence of the sliding-scale duties?—Yes, as far as it has reference to the Baltic; but I believe this, that if the Corn Laws were to be abolished to-morrow, it might create greater employment for our ships for the year, but ultimately it would only cause increased production and greater competition of foreign vessels, and we should go back as far as the Baltic is concerned. If we had a free trade in corn it would be most injurious to the British shipowner, for this reason, that by the new Tariff we shall have a vast quantity of corn by the St. Lawrence, which will be exclusively brought in British shipping? Mr. Liddell: That will be very beneficial to the British shipping? No doubt; an alteration in the Corn Laws would destroy the new trade that is about to spring up in Canada. Totally repeal the Corn Laws, and the growing trade with Canada will be crushed, consequently American, Canadian, and British shipping, would receive a severe and decisive blow."

That was the evidence of a gentleman who was quoted as favourable to the measures of Her Majesty's Ministers. The right hon. Baronet had also referred to the increase of feather beds; and certainly he could not congratulate him upon his reference. At first he had been unable to conceive why so much intercourse had taken place between the Premier and the feather-bed maker; but as the bed of the Government had not recently been "a bed of roses," perhaps he was consulting him as to how they could lie softer. Then the right hon. Baronet went on to talk about osiers. Now, it was a curious fact that an osier dealer had sometime since remonstrated with Mr. Gladstone respecting the alteration of duties in 1842,

and had told him that when he went to Manchester for orders he had been informed that, since the reduction of duties, osiers were imported from Holland so cheap that there were no orders for him. But then the right hon. Baronet went on to talk about the flax trade. Now no article in the Tariff made more against him than flax. The only proof of the success of the alteration of duties on this article was the present favourable condition of the Irish linen trade; but he would declare that he had seen in this country samples of Silesian table linen as far superior to the Irish as anything could be, and calculated, he verily believed, at no distant period, entirely to supersede it. The right hon. Baronet had made allusion to Anacharsis Cloots. The allusion was not a happy one; for if at the present time there was one individual who more than another resembled Anacharsis Cloots, it was the Premier himself. He it was who soared so high on the wings of universal philanthropy as to lose sight of every national interest; he it was who robbed this great Government of its sovereign character, and deprived the people of every reason to entertain public respect for public men. He it was who, like Anacharsis Cloots, called on them to act as "citizens of the world"—endeavoured to rally round him Dutch, Portuguese, Poles, Swedes, Danes, Belgians, Irish and Scotch, telling them all, "I have no partialities: whoever produces the cheapest article him will I deal with." The Anacharsis Cloots of the day, the Prime Minister of England, no doubt hoped to meet all nations on some central point of the earth's even surface, that they might swear eternal friendships, and bind themselves together in adamantine chains of so-called national intercourse. But he would not follow the right hon. Baronet further. He should best sum up the arguments against him in his own words. On the 3rd of April, 1840, the right hon. Baronet said—

"Suppose, as in the years 1833, 1834, 1835, there should be a succession of very good seasons, and a consequently large supply in this country, and also, as might naturally be expected, a plentiful harvest on the Continent. Now, under circumstances like these, the foreign market being overstocked, he would ask whether with a fixed duty the trader in corn might not be induced to bring over very large supplies, and after paying the duty offer it in the market at a price much below that of British growth? And would not this operate as a great discouragement to corn of home production, a great discouragement to agriculture, and cause a great deal of land to be thrown out of cultivation. Theoretically, and in the abstract, this magnificent plan might be correct; but when he looked to the practice, to the great interests which had grown up under another system—when he found that whatever theoretical objections might apply to that system, still great and complicated interests had grown up under it, which probably could not be disturbed without immense peril—when he besides bore in mind, that defective as that system in principle might be, yet under it this country, considering its population, had acquired the greatest Colonial Empire, the greatest Indian Empire, the greatest influence which any country ever possessed — when he considered, also, that under this system (he would not say in consequence of it, for that might be denied by hon. Gentlemen), but simultaneously with it, we presented this spectacle to the world—a country limited in extent and population, yet carrying on greater commercial and manufacturing enterprise than any other country ever exhibited: when he considered all these things, he would not go the length of the Prime Minister, who said that he who entertained the notion of upsetting this system 'proposed the maddest thing that ever he had heard of;' but this he would say, that he would not consent to put to hazard those enormous interests for the purpose of substituting an untried principle for one which might be theoretically defective, but under which practically our power and greatness had been established; fearing that the embarrassment, the confusion, and distress which might therefrom arise, would greatly countervail and outweigh any advantage which could be anticipated from establishing at the expense of what was practically good, that which might be theoretically correct."

Those were the right hon. Baronet's words, the conclusion of a noble speech, on the 3rd of April, 1840; at a period when, though out of office, he was at the head of a great constitutional party; and he owned that it seemed to him, that whilst those words were not inferior in point of eloquence, they were far superior in wisdom to anything the right hon. Baronet had said in the course of these debates. He thought he had now fulfilled his promise of providing an answer to the peroration of the right hon. Baronet such as it deserved. He (Mr. Finch) would now make a few remarks on the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department. The right hon. Baronet had a very happy knack of perplexing very simple subjects when it suited his purpose. The right hon. Baronet said that the price of food was low in America, and also in Poland, and yet wages were high in one country, and low in the other. But there was no similarity between the circumstances of the two countries. It had been said that our manufacturers would be undersold unless a reduction should take place in the price of food. Now this was the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman himself:—

"If they desired a low price of corn, let them

explicitly declare their intention, and he would tell them at once that they desired to produce a low rate of wages. They sought, in fact, to lower wages; and let the agriculturists and the manufacturers thoroughly understand that low wages would certainly be the ultimate effect of the low price of corn."

And the right hon. Gentleman added—

"If when, after a lapse of four or five years, the price of corn should rise, because we shall be dependent upon foreigners, and because large quantities of land had been thrown out of cultivation, in vain would the unhappy labourers seek for a rise in the price of wages."

There was another statement of the right hon. Baronet which he really thought was the most unfortunate that had ever been heard of within the walls of Parliament. The right hon. Baronet stated, that when bread was cheap the rate of crime diminished, and when bread was dear the rate of crime was increased. How did he establish that position? Why, he took six manufacturing counties — York, Lancashire, Cheshire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, and Staffordshire. He then took six years—from 1840 to 1845, and he divided these six years in halves—the first half from 1840 to 1842, the other from 1843 to 1845. He then showed the rate of crime in the first and second halves of this period, and showed that it was diminished 18 per cent in the latter period as compared with the former. He then took the price of corn for the same period, and showed that wheat was from 60*s.* to 70*s.* per quarter during the first three years, and that on the latter it was from 50*s.* to 60*s.* Now it ought to be remembered that the counties instanced by the right hon. Baronet were all manufacturing counties; and every body knew that when the manufacturers were distressed there was a great increase of crime, and that when manufactures flourished there was a corresponding diminution of crime. In the first half of these years there was great distress in the manufacturing districts. It was well known that at that time the iron trade in Staffordshire was greatly depressed in consequence of the great supply of iron brought into the market from a new process brought into use in Glasgow. Many furnaces were blown out; and the distress was so great that many families emigrated from Staffordshire to Glasgow in search of employment. The same distress existed in Manchester and other parts of the manufacturing districts; and it was abundantly evident that this would cause an increase of crime in those districts, which would be diminished when the manufacturers became fully employed, so that the price of bread had little or nothing to do with it. Another of the right hon. Baronet's statements was to this effect, that there was a great difference in the price of corn during the last year, and therefore the sliding-scale did not answer. Now, this was a most unfair statement. The dear corn was the corn which remained over from the preceding year; and in consequence of the wetness of the season, as compared with the last, the corn of the former year was much in demand to be mixed with that of the present. If the farmers were not to be allowed the use of this advantage when it occurred, they must go out of the profession altogether. But the right hon. Baronet had said that the sliding-scale had become locked, and therefore the sliding-scale would not do. He asked, who had passed that scale but the Members of Her Majesty's Government? From the moment the rumour went abroad that the ports were to be opened, prices fell at home, while they rose abroad; the rate of duty remained stationary, and it was not to be expected that speculators would import corn at the rate of 12*s.* or 15*s.* duty, when they had the prospect of having the ports opened to them altogether. If it had not been for the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, the sliding-scale would have worked fast enough. The right hon. Baronet talked of this measure as being a settlement of the question. He thought that in this he was reckoning a little without his host. There could not be a settlement of the question without an appeal to the country. That appeal must come either this year or the next; and on that appeal it would be seen that the question would be as much open as before. He would give what he thought would be the probable issue of the matter. There would be again a long debate on the subject in the next Parliament; and if it were again carried against the agriculturists, there would next year be a debate upon the repeal of the malt tax, and two or three other duties. Next year would be a year of distress, and then would come petitions for protection, and perhaps for some important constitutional changes. The distress of the agriculturists would extend to those engaged in trade and manufactures, and there would be much shaking and fear among the fundholders as to the difficulties of maintaining our financial system; and as the result of all these things he should

not be surprised if the leading free traders were burnt in effigy, and the country returned to the old system. He would now, in a few words—and he must apologize to the House for detaining them so long—touch upon the general question. The right hon. Baronet said in a former debate, that the principles of free trade were the principles of common sense. That might be true in the abstract, and it might be practically in use in some planet which never knew more—if such planet existed; but he believed that on this earth, the unqualified principles of free trade, instead of being the principles of common sense, would be discovered to be the principles of uncommon nonsense. The country ought to be cautious of entering into too close a commercial engagement with foreign countries, so as to render itself dependent upon them for a supply of necessary articles—such countries especially as Russia, France, and America. In the first place, with respect to political economists, it was known that they had often made egregious mistakes themselves. Nothing could be a greater blunder than that of Adam Smith, who held, that corn, being a bulky article, no more could be imported than about the 175th part of the consumption of England, Now, they had seen of late years as much as a fifth part of the consumption imported from abroad. But respect to the general theory, he had no objection to it. According to the free-trade notions, it was argued, that if France excelled in the silk manufacture, she was to export it to England; and if England excelled in cotton, she was to export to France; and so with respect to china, earthenware, &c. Now that used practically to be the case between the two countries; and that actually was the basis of the Treaty concluded with France by Mr. Pitt before the revolutionary war. But the result of that was, that the intercourse between the two countries was stopped. We had to establish silk manufactories, and the French cotton mills. It had been said that Buonaparte was a great friend to British agriculture. In the same manner he was a great friend to several branches of British manufactures which were established in consequence of being unable as heretofore to obtain supplies from France. It was evident, therefore, that the theory of free trade was constantly liable to be disturbed in its practical operation in the event of a war. What was the inference he drew from this? That they ought to give advantages to their Colonies over other countries, because in the event of the parent State being engaged in a war, the Colonies were exposed to great dangers, and often called upon to make great sacrifices. Of course advantages ought also to be given to the parent country. After making these qualifications, what was the next step? Let them look round the world and see what were the countries with which they were less likely to go to war, and enter into intimate commercial relations with them; so that the country, if it must be dependent, might be dependent upon them. This would open an immense field for their manufactures. It would include the whole of South America, the Brazils, Greece, Italy, Austria, Turkey, China; in fact, it would embrace four-fifths of the whole globe. But when they came to those countries with which they were likely to be engaged in war, they ought to be cautious of entering into new commercial engagements, or of becoming dependent upon them. These countries were Russia, France, and America. After stating shortly the causes that rendered war with these countries not improbable, he said, at the present moment, they were unhappily dependent in a great measure upon America for cotton and tobacco. Now it would be wise policy, instead of increasing this dependence, to diminish it—to encourage the growth of cotton in India, which would take the manufactures in return that were now taken by America; and in the other Colonies tobacco might be grown, while by developing the cultivation of Canada, they might render themselves independent both of Russia and America in the article of corn. In this way they would render the country independent, and at the same time they would have a flourishing commerce, which would be put upon a stable foundation, not exposed to the reverses and calamities that they would be exposed to if under the present system in the event of a war, or even in the event of a scarcity, whether at home or abroad. There was one remark which fell from the hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House, which deserved some reply. He said it was absurd to talk of paying Russia for her produce in gold, for the fact was, we imported gold from Russia. Now, he thought that made the evil worse, if they were first obliged to get the gold from abroad, and then were forced to send it back again to purchase corn. That was the case; otherwise what was the meaning of the operation of the screw,

which caused so much distress among manufacturers? The present measure he held to be most unjust. No doubt it was argued to be necessary for the general public good; but if on the faith of protection being for the general public good persons had for the last fifty years purchased and cultivated land at great expense —if no less than four hundred millions of capital had been invested on the faith of such an understanding, then all at once to sweep away protection now was essentially unjust. In the first place, it would displace a large amount of home labour. So long as this country had a system of Poor Laws —and Heaven forbid they should ever be overthrown! for then general benevolence would cease altogether—so long this country could not pretend to compete with foreign agriculture. Then there was the land tax, and various other local taxes; and it ought to be remembered that agriculture was essentially different from all other things. The noble Lord the Member for South Lancashire had stated, on the first night of the Session, that the agriculturist was a manufacturer just like any other manufacturer. He had a high respect for the talents of the noble Lord; and if the House wished to convert this debate into an epic poem, he knew no one to whom they might apply with greater success than the noble Lord. But with regard to the agriculturist being a manufacturer, he wondered what a manufacturer would say, if, after expending all his capital, he found that 40 or 60 per cent might be destroyed by accident. There was this, also, to be remembered, that the more capital there was laid out on land, the greater was the loss in the event of a bad season. He had once met the hon. Member for Stockport, and naturally approached the hon. Member with some trepidation as a sort of free-trade dragon. But when he drew near he found that he had no symptoms of a dragon about him—no scales nor claws, but a remarkably amiable, well-bred, and entertaining companion. In the course of conversation the hon. Member asked him, why don't you use the steam plough? Now, that question argued his ignorance of the difficulties farmers had to contend with. He should like to see the steam plough in operation in any one point. Suppose that fifty or sixty labourers were out of employment, while the steam plough was in operation; the stacks would be fired, the machinery broken, and they would have a system resembling the reign of terror. They were told by some hon. Gentlemen that they had nothing to fear. But what said Sir Robert Peel on this point formerly? In 1842, quoting the opinion of Mr. Meek, on the probability of the supply from Denmark, the right hon. Baronet said—

"Now what does Mr. Meek say with regard to Denmark? The prices of corn in Denmark have, during the last twenty-five years, averaged for wheat 28s. 10d. per quarter, barley, 14s., oats, 10s. 6d. Considering the depression of the corn market during the greater part of that period, and that the prospect of a permanent sale of corn in England will be likely to render the continental markets more steady and more firm than they have hitherto been, it is probable that prices free on board would not be much below the following quotation—wheat from 30s. to 31s. per imperial quarter. And he adds that, in case of a regular and speedy demand in England for foreign corn, the quantity produced in Denmark and Sleswick Holstein might without difficulty be considerably increased. And in passing a law regulating the importation of foreign corn, is it not wise to deliberate upon what may be the possible supply in future years? Is it not a wise principle of legislation not to take wholly the prices of corn now, but to consider what may be the increased improvements by railways or otherwise: what may be the effect of a regular demand, and what may be the diminished freights? Ought we not to take all those things into account when we propose to legislate, without ever having the opportunity of retracing our steps, at least so far as the agriculturists are concerned. Mr. Meek says, further, that many experienced persons in Denmark are of opinion that if the trade in corn were made constantly open at a moderate duty, wheat and corn would generally be grown in Denmark to a much greater extent than it is at present. But you will say that the quantity grown in Denmark is insufficient to supply the wants of our population. Now, what does Mr. Meek say on this point? He tells us that the average export of wheat from Denmark is from 150,000 to 200,000 quarters; and Mr. Meek adds that 700,000 quarters of corn might be brought in years of moderate growth. . . . . Then, I say, if prices are below 50s. in England, and there is a great quantity of surplus wheat in Denmark, do not discourage home production—do not chill the expectations and blight the hopes of your own farmers, by permitting the Danish agriculturist to throw a quantity of his corn at a low rate of duty into your market, and so damage the price of your own produce. In discussing a question like this, I own it appears to me that the strict principles of free trade cannot be applied without danger to the interests of the community."

On the 19th of February, 1839, the right hon. Baronet, speaking on Mr. Villiers's Motion, said:—

"When you tell me that corn is 60s. a quarter, I ask is there not a paramount necessity for maintaining the obligations of public faith? And is it just to repeal the Corn Laws while continuing taxation upon the agricultural interests, which is the very cause of the high price of corn? Can I shut out of my consideration altogether the operation of the malt tax—the operation of the Poor

Laws—the operation of the county rate, and of all those burdens which press heavily upon the landed interest?"

Now, the right hon. Baronet might have relieved agriculture from the malt tax and the other burdens to which he referred; but, instead of doing so, he had preferred taking the duty off cotton and glass, and had thus put it out of his power to remove these burdens from the land. He would tell the House what he was convinced would be the eventual result of this measure. In the course of two years there would be a glut of corn—wheat would become unsaleable in this country, and there would neither be rent for the landlord, profit for the tenant, nor wages for the labourer. This was said by Sir Robert Peel years ago; and he said it with peculiar force, for he made the remark under the idea that we were to have a fixed 8*s.* duty. He would only further observe, that if, after all, this country was to be placed in a position which all her best and wisest statesmen had endeavoured to avoid; if they were to become dependent upon Russia and America for corn, the most favourable effect would be, that they would still further increase the present enormous manufacturing population, which in the course of the last twenty-five years of peace had come to press upon the home supply; and which, in a few years more, would press upon the home and foreign supply both; and they would become so much dependent upon America, that they might as well burn the history of England, and become a province of America at once, for the sun of England's greatness would have set for ever. He would conclude by noticing one observation which fell from the hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House. He argued that if agriculture in the Colonies was placed in the same position with agriculture at home, they would have no right to complain. But then, the agriculturists at home thought they had every right to complain. And he must say that he thought Canada had been shamfully used. If ever there was a compact entered into between Parliament and another country, it was the compact entered into between Canada and Her Majesty's Ministers—that if the Canadians would consent to tax American corn 3*s.* per quarter, this country would give Canadian corn the first preference after Ireland; but by this measure, instead of having the first preference after Ireland, it would now be last of all. Her Majesty's Ministers ought to recollect that there were vast temptations to the Canadians to throw off their allegiance. Their loyalty and allegiance to this country had already cost them great sacrifices; and if they were now to ally themselves with America, they would have to pay the present tax of 8*s.* upon American corn, and in the event of a war between this country and America, their country would not be invaded, their crops would not be destroyed, and their lives would not be lost. He would make a single remark as to the result of the division. Her Majesty's Ministers would have a nominal majority, but they would be in a *bonâ fide* minority. When all the Members who now misrepresented their constituents were deducted from the one side, and added to the other, there could be no doubt that this apparent majority would, in the estimation of the country, be a real minority. On the other hand, the protectionists would retire from the division with unbroken ranks and undaunted hearts, ready to enter the battle-field again on the first occasion, and to renew the contest. They would appeal not only to their constituents but to the country. They knew that the majority of the population were with them; and he believed that the majority of the constituencies were with them also. That appeal must soon be made to the nation, and the least he reckoned upon in the new Parliament was 300 good Protectionists. They would, therefore, see that the cause of protection was not lost. He believed that that cause was still dear to the British nation, because it was in unison with British habits, and consonant to British interests. That cause he should continue to support—strong in the conviction of the principles on which it was founded; and he should support it as long as he had a voice to speak, an arm to raise, or a shot to discharge in its behalf.

MR. SEYMER said, in rising for the first time to address the House, he wished, if possible, to enlist the feelings of hon. Gentlemen in his favour by assuring them that his speech would not occupy many minutes. He did not mean to discuss the principle of protection; that had already been fully discussed on his side of the House. Had there not been frequent allusion made in the course of this debate, to the opinions of the tenant-farmers, he would not have risen on the present occasion. Hon. Members who had been elected for the last five or six years, appeared by this time to have forgot what were the opin-

ions of their constituents. Their memories, however, would probably be refreshed on an occasion which could not be far distant. As he had been elected on Thursday last, he would, with the permission of the House, state what were, at the present moment, the opinions of the tenant-farmers in Dorsetshire; and he believed that the opinions of the Dorsetshire farmers were the opinions of nine-tenths of the farmers of England. The hon. Member for Finsbury, in the course of the present debate, had been pleased to say, that what the farmers required was, not protection to agriculture, but the protection of the ballot, in which case they would vote conscientiously in favour of free trade. Now he would inform that hon. Gentleman and those who cheered him, that there could not be a greater mistake than to say, that the genuine feelings of the farmers were not in favour of protection. He believed that that statement was a mere radical shot fired at random by the hon. Member, who might very fairly represent the feelings of a metropolitan district, but who evidently knew nothing of the feelings of the farmers. There were one or two circumstances connected with the election in Dorsetshire, which, with the permission of the House, he would allude to, in order to prove his assertion that the genuine feelings of the farmers were in favour of protection. His hon. Colleague and himself became candidates for the county in consequence of a requisition numerously signed by the tenant-farmers of the county. It happened that three or four of the largest estates in the county were in the hands of free traders. It was therefore natural that the tenantry on those estates should hold back and refuse to sign the requisition till they knew what were the wishes of their landlords. He believed it was perfectly notorious and well known, that the English tenantry generally did wish to consult the feelings of their landlords. And he did not think they were to be blamed for this. On this occasion they did, previous to signing the requisition to his hon. Colleague and himself, ask whether there would be any objection taken to this course on the part of their landlords? He was happy to state that these Gentlemen, much to their credit, said, as this was a farmers' question, they would not interfere. From the moment that was known, almost without a single exception, the farmers came forward and signed the requisition to his hon. Colleague and himself. That, he thought, proved his assertion, that the genuine feelings of the farmers were in favour of protection. Another statement had been made to the House, that only those persons cared for protection who were small and slovenly farmers — men who the free traders said ought never to have been farmers at all, but ought to be swept from the face of the earth; but that those who were really good farmers cared nothing about protection. Now, so far as his experience went, he would say that the very reverse was the case. The farmers were certainly all in favour of protection; but the small farmers, not being in the habit of attending to political questions, did not understand much of the subject. They were very wisely in favour of protection; because they did not wish any change — they wanted to let well alone. But the large farmers, the men who employed machinery and purchased foreign manures, and brought the appliances of science to bear upon agriculture—these men had leisure to attend to the complicated details of a question, and they, to a man, were strong protectionists. While speaking of the opinions of the farmers, he must, in justice to them, mention another point. In the course of his canvass he had heard strong language used with respect to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, and to the Ministry in general. The farmers were plain men, and they used plain words, and he was afraid it would not be quite Parliamentary if he were to state the language which he had heard them use with respect to the right hon. Baronet. He had also heard strong expressions of dread at the consequences of the measure now proposed; but this he could say, that he had not witnessed any symptom of disaffection amongst the farmers; no abatement of their attachment to the institutions of the country; and therein he thought they were honourably contrasted with the Gentlemen of the Anti-Corn-Law League. The moment matters went wrong with the League, disagreeable expressions were used, and those hints about an hereditary aristocracy were thrown out, which were so painful to persons favourable to the maintenance of the great institutions of the country. The loyalty of the farmers was a constant quantity; the loyalty of the Leaguers varied with the weight of their purse. In his opinion, persons so loyal and well affected as the farmers of England were entitled to the greatest respect at the hands of the Government; but he regretted to say, that had the farmers been less loyal—had they

been more clamorous, and, he was afraid, more seditious in their language, he believed their opinions would have had greater weight with Her Majesty's Government. He would only add, that should the hon. Gentlemen of the Anti-Corn-Law League, or their successors, for successors in agitation they would certainly have—should the Gentlemen of the League or their successors next attack one of the most cherished institutions of the country; and should the right hon. Baronet or any other Minister conceive it to be his duty to yield to that agitation, the Minister and the League would be met on that occasion by the same opposition from the farmers and independent yeomanry of England, as they now had to encounter from them on the question in which they were supposed to be specially interested. Having said thus much, as the result of his observations amongst the farmers, by whom he had so recently been returned, he would not longer detain the House than to thank them for the patience with which they had heard him.

Mr. VILLIERS: Sir, I have some scruple in rising after the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, from observing the order in which you have selected Members who have risen to address this House. I believe the hon. Gentleman and myself are agreed at present in opinion; for, if I am not mistaken, coming recently as he does from the hustings and from addressing the farmers of Dorsetshire, he has stated there, representing as he did his own views and those of the farmers, that he was now for the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. ["No, no!"] Then the hon. Gentleman has been entirely misreported; for there is not one newspaper that reported his Address which did not give sentiments to the effect that if there was to be a change in the Corn Law, he for one would be in favour of immediate repeal. The hon. Gentleman, it appears, now denies that he ever said in the county of Dorset that he was for immediate repeal.

Mr. SEYMER had no wish to be misunderstood on the point. What he said was, that he should oppose to the utmost the measures of Her Majesty's Ministers; but that if he failed in that opposition, he thought, on the whole, if repeal was to be carried out, that instead of being deferred three years, it would better it should take place at once.

Mr. VILLIERS: I am glad to see that the accuracy of the press is so well supported by the hon. Gentleman. I am happy to hear his confirmation of the report to which I alluded. ["No!"] Why do you say no, when the hon. Gentleman has just said yes? He has said that if the Corn Laws were to be repealed, it was far better to have them immediately repealed, than postponed for three years. I claim him therefore as a supporter of the Amendment to this measure which it is my intention to propose; and if the hon. Gentleman is really representing the sentiments of the farmers, I believe he will vote for that Motion. The hon. Member has told us that the tenant-farmers are an independent body of men; but the proof he has given us of it is, that most of them go to their landlords to ask how they ought to vote. He has stated that a great number of persons whose support he received held lands from landlords of liberal principles, and, fortunately for him, they got leave to vote as they liked. He has, however, I admit, given one proof that the farmers were independent. He says they are generally loyal and well-affected. Now, this is a somewhat more cheering proof that they are not wholly under the influence of their landlords. I believe it to be the case. I believe they are very quiet good sort of people, and in general too steady and sensible to be really influenced by the disloyal, disaffected, inflammatory language that from the upper classes is addressed to them. The complaints of the farmers are not against the State—they do not quarrel with the Government—their grievances are nearer home. Those who know them are aware that they have domestic grievances that are never redressed; but the landlords, instead of remedying these, have been going about and telling them that the Government of the country is endeavouring to injure them, and that it is composed of men void of honour, truth, and honesty. The farmers, however, are much too sensible to be led away by all the interested language addressed to them; and in their hearts I believe what the hon. Gentleman says is true, that they are for the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, and for abolishing the system at once. ["No, no."] I think the hon. Gentleman's speech went to show us how very much the farmers were under the influence of the landlords with respect to their votes, and therefore their opinions are not necessarily those of their landlords. I will just refer to a speech which was made before him. That was the most extraordinary address that we have heard recently; it was nearly an

hour and a half long. I refer to the speech delivered by the hon. Member for Rutlandshire (Mr. G. Finch). He is the last newly-elected protectionist Member in this House. I think the hon. Gentleman must have met the same person as I met with this morning, who asked me what all this was about, and what was the cause of this protracted debate ; for he said it was only the same old story over again, and nobody really cared about it out of the House, except that it might be brought to a close. The hon. Member gets up, and like the chorus in the Greek plays, tells us all that has passed, how we come to be where we are, who has done this and who has done the other, arriving only at the same conclusion as those of his party who have preceded him, namely, that if the Corn Laws are abolished, England's sun will set for ever. He professes to tell us what is the result of this election—that it indicates the opinion of the public on the question ; while the fact is, that it indicates nothing but that which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dorsetshire has stated—the influence which the landlords in Rutlandshire have over their tenants ; and they have returned him, as many others have been returned, just to represent their views and opinions. A single novelty in the hon. Gentleman's speech there was, namely, that it was important to put an end to the trade with America and France, because those are countries which we might possibly go to war with—the wisdom of which is so obvious as hardly to need repeating. Sir, I really have some scruple in rising to address the House upon this subject. In the first place, there is nothing I can say respecting the question now before the House which has not upon this occasion been better said by Her Majesty's Government ; and, in the second place, I believe that no service would be more highly appreciated by the public than that of facilitating in every way the progress of the measure. Hon. Gentlemen in that corner of the House do not seem to encourage this forbearance. They have marked out for themselves a course of obstruction, which, perhaps, they can explain, and in which, if they can, they are more fortunate than other people. I cannot, however, help contrasting the patience with which the House now bears with them with the conduct adopted when the persons who brought forward this question at other times have met with. When persons in a minority, in this House, and who have promoted this discussion, have stood up and pleaded for the sufferings of their constituents, and have asked for an inquiry into the connection of this law with all that misery and privation, were asking even for a partial inquiry into that which they ascribed to the influence of this enactment—I have tingling in my ears now those hideous noises, those horrid yells which were then raised to stifle all expression of opinion. I think there is also presented a striking contrast in what took place upon the passing of this law in 1815, with what is now occurring with regard to its abolition. The people were exclaiming in the streets against the enactment of this law. Soldiers surrounded this House ; and the Members made complaints that they had not even time to present their petitions to the House, foretelling all the misery and distress which its operation could entail upon them. Notwithstanding which, the Corn Law was passed with the greatest speed which the forms of this House would enable a Bill to pass into law. But now Gentlemen opposite are pleading for themselves, for the rich, and for the aristocracy ; and therefore we have this debate protracted to a longer period than has ever been known upon any other question — longer than any question has been protracted within the memory of any Member within this House. Now we are to have an unprecedented delay. For three weeks have we sat here listening to the same statements over and over again. After all the experience which has been gained of the mischief of this law ; after it has been discredited by every enlightened authority ; after all the argument being on one side, and that side being supported by every statesman of note—I say, here we are, having the same things repeated over and over again, for the space of three weeks. Such is the difference between the way in which the interests of the rich, and the rights of the poor, are considered in this House. However, Sir, as the time is to be wasted, I do not think I should be really doing justice to the principles I have advocated in this House—I do not think I should be doing justice to those whom I represent here, and those with whom I have co-operated so long throughout the country—if I did not express my joy and satisfaction at the concession that has been made to wisdom, truth, and justice in the propositions and avowals which have been made by Her Majesty's Ministers. ["Oh!"] And, Sir, as the sub-

ject has been so much forced upon the consideration of the House, I cannot help forming an opinion as to whether this concession has been made at the sacrifice of honour or from interest on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers; and I declare most solemnly, that it seems to me, that the concessions which have been made, have been the result of a lively sense of the responsibility which, as Ministers and statesmen, they have of the danger to the country from the continuance of this law. And I must state for those who have depended chiefly on fact and argument to persuade their opponents, that it is most gratifying to observe that the abandonment of the protective system has been conceded by the leaders on both sides under circumstances which place them entirely above the suspicion of any interested views; for I do believe, that when the noble Lord the Member for London declared in this House, at the beginning of last Session, that he considered that the system of protection, as it is called, was the bane of that interest which was thought to be secured by it—when he proposed, in the course of last summer, that the House should resolve that those duties were injurious to those who were said to be benefited by them—when he, moreover, addressed his letter to his constituents, telling them that he was ready to give full effect to his conviction—I say, that when he did this, I believe he did so, not only from an honest sense of what was due to the community; but I am not sure whether in doing so he was not considered by some to have marred the interests of his party. With respect to the right hon. Gentleman, there has been so much discussion on his conduct, that it is impossible not to have formed an opinion upon his position in this matter; and I declare that I cannot see in what respect he has deserved the reproaches which he has received from his party. As far as I have collected from what has been said in this House, the right hon. Gentleman does not propose this measure himself without reluctance. He has made the proposition himself, being satisfied that it was right that it should be made, but only after having submitted to others the propriety of proposing it to this House. It is no fault of his, as far as I can discover, that he is Minister at this moment, or that he is now the proposer of this measure. I think, therefore, Sir, that on this ground, and certainly on every other, the public have no reason for complaint, that the right hon. Gentleman should have been the Minister to submit such a measure to the country. If I collect the opinion of the public rightly upon this subject, it is, that they are pleased that the right hon. Baronet should have thrown aside those trammels with which every Ministry has been surrounded on this question, and that he has at length cleared himself from an insolent domination to which all past Governments have been too long subject, and has become the Minister of the country. It has been the boast of this class that they have chosen the Minister of the country; and they have always threatened their Minister, that if he ventured to meddle with the Corn Law, to deal in fact with this privilege of their class, he should cease to hold power in their service. The right hon. Gentleman, actuated by a sense of what is due to the country, has braved this party, disregarded this dictation, and has come forward and proposed a measure for the interest of the community, and has thrown himself upon that community unreservedly for support. I believe that the public in general are delighted to see him relieved from the trammels of his former party; and I further believe that the public will carry him through, not only in this, but in every other measure in which he will consult the public interest, and have the honesty and courage to propose them to the House. Sir, I know that this measure is not a complete one; I am aware that in one respect it falls short of what the country wished. I have been asked by an hon. Gentleman, the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyne, whether I will indeed venture to recommend the adoption of this measure? Why, Sir, I did put on record, within a few hours after that measure was proposed, my congratulations to my constituents at their being likely to receive so large an instalment of what they had been struggling for so long. If I had not taken that step, I should have been much disposed to have done so after the opening speech of the Member for Bristol, who proposed the Amendment now before the House; and who said, that if this measure was passed, he and his party would regard the system of protection as abolished for ever. If I had not done it then, I should have felt justified in doing so after witnessing the opposition which the right hon. Gentleman has received from the other side of the House. I say, the violence of that opposition will

be accepted by the country as an apology for many of the deficiencies and much of the incompleteness of the measure. The right hon. Gentleman will be looked upon as a negotiator with that party which has long domineered and tyrannized over this country, and as having obtained the most that he was able for the people. The public will see from the conduct of the hon. Members opposite, what difficulties the right hon. Baronet has had to contend with, and what a fierce spirit has been opposed to him on account of the measures he has proposed. Gentlemen opposite, however, are not aware, perhaps, of what service they are rendering to the right hon. Baronet, and the popularity they are giving to the measure by their conduct in the course they are pursuing. For my part, I believe that the violence and passion that have been exhibited upon that side of the House, in respect to that measure, has of itself endeared it to the public —that every Member who has deserted the Minister, and exhibits the sacrifice that the right hon. Gentleman has been obliged to make in proposing this measure of national advantage, places the right hon. Gentleman on a pinnacle of public favour which he could not have expected otherwise to attain. Sir, the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyne asked me whether I would dare to show my face among my constituents after supporting this measure? I would ask the hon. Member and any of those who support him, whether two years hence they will venture into any public meeting and show their faces after supporting an Amendment which I must consider the most daring defiance of public opinion, and of the general interest, I have ever known? It makes no distinction in the measures involved in the scheme, without denying the expediency of many of them: it says simply and peremptorily to the scheme, "We will have none of it, we abjure the principle of it." There are many parts of the right. hon. Baronet's scheme admitted to be beneficial to agriculture. There are many people without the means of subsistence, who might expect to obtain it if some of these measures were carried; for they might hope to exchange food for their industry, which they cannot do now; but simply because that article is dealt with, from which so many here derive their income, the whole scheme is to be rejected. [*Cries of* "No, no," *from the Conservative benches.*] You say, "No, no;" but are there not many of you who have said that there were parts of the scheme which were most desirable, and which would much benefit agriculture? You say, "No, no;" but I ask if there are not many of you who have said that some parts of the scheme are most desirable and expedient. I ask if noble Lords have not, at some of their protection meetings, said that several of the schemes included in this measure will be most advantageous to agriculture? [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Why I can point to counties where protectionists have come forward and said so. [*Cries of* "Name, name."] There is Lord Essex, in Hertfordshire, said that Indian corn would be a great boon to agriculture. ["Oh, oh!"] Why, he is a protectionist, and he would not let foreign wheat come in to feed the people, but he would allow foreign food to feed cattle. You will not even allow those who are graziers, and who want to feed their cattle, to have this food from abroad. ["Hear, hear!"] You may shake your heads, but I say it is so. Why, my hon. Friend the Member for Newark, who has just been returned, a rank protectionist, shakes his head; what does he mean? Does he mean that he would let in Indian corn, not fearing that it might supersede the use of the nobler grain? He would let it in! Then why vote for this Amendment? The Bill is opposed *in toto*. The Irish people might starve. ["No, no!"] Oh, you would open the ports; how long is it since you consented to do that? Since you discovered that there was little corn to come in. There was nothing said in last autumn about opening the ports. Then it was said that there was no scarcity, that there was nothing but the basest cowardice on the part of the Government. "Afraid," you said, "afraid of the people starving! Why, was there ever such pusillanimous government as this? Was there ever such turpitude?" I heard this expression the other night. This is what you stated then; but now you have discovered that grain is actually going out of this country from the warehouses to neighbouring States, and that there is such a scarcity on the Continent that there is no more grain to come in; and you now state, and the hon. Member for Somersetshire says, "God forbid that we should prevent anything coming in to save the people, if they are starving!" Anything may come in so long as it is sure that prices will not fall. With little prospect of advantage the ports may be open now. ["No, no."] Well,

if that be not so, I do not understand what you mean by saying "No, no," when I assert that you are trying to oppose all the measures comprehended in this scheme. Sir, we have heard in the course of this debate, that it is for the purpose of discussing the great principle, the great system of protection, the system of policy that has long prevailed in this country, that this debate has been so long continued. Now, this is the eleventh day that we have been discussing the system of protection; and I want to know whether any one has the least idea what that system is? Has any one the slightest idea, from anything that has fallen from the hon. Gentleman opposite, what that system or principle is—whether there is any rule in it—any result from it; whether anything that ought to be dignified by the name of a system of policy, resting on general principles and involving the general good, has been raised in question on the occasion? Why, it is quite clear that no one has given the House an idea of what is called the system, if he has one himself. It has been asked on this side, whether this system of protection can be universally applied. "Oh, certainly not," it is answered. You say you cannot regulate the price of labour, whatever you may do with the price of food. It has been admitted that cannot be done. Can you define the cases where protection ought to be applied? They have not been stated, if it is possible. "Is it," we ask, "opposed to the principle of competition?" "Oh, God forbid! it is not opposed to competition, for Lord Stanley, our leader, defines protection to be 'competition subject to regulation.'" But you cannot tell us the principle on which it should be regulated. You say you do not mean to oppose all the advantages proposed in the measure; but you want to maintain the principle of protection. I thought that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Disraeli) would have told us something about the principle, would have shown us how its application could be made national or general; but instead of enlightening us himself, he only complained of others not enlightening him, and lamented that his friends around him had not told him what the principle was. Now, I ask the House candidly whether this great system, which was said to be in question, has not dwindled down into a complaint of that fanciful obstruction to the trade in food for the purpose of making it dear and scarce, called the sliding-scale, being in danger of being removed? Every Member who has spoken upon this subject, when he has risen to vindicate the system of protection, has hardly been on his legs five minutes before he commences to discuss the horrors of free trade in food, and to depict the advantages of the sliding-scale, which, it seems, is dignified by the term of protection to agriculture. Well, but here again, have we got any information upon the influence of this mode of protecting agriculture? Have we had the slightest intimation upon the subject, how the science of agriculture is advanced by this means; how capital can be wisely applied to the cultivation of the soil? Have we even heard anything but the vaguest assertions as to what prices would be if there were a free trade in corn? Not one single syllable has been uttered to show how this impediment to trade tends to advance agriculture. Not one single agricultural authority has been quoted in the whole of this debate to show that the sliding-scale, or what you term this system of protection to agriculture, promotes improvement in that business. Not one single man engaged in agriculture—not an individual who would be an authority in any hundred or parish in this country, have you quoted to back your statements that this protection is essential to a proper culture of soil. Many have been quoted on the other side, who have said that agriculture depends on nothing of the kind, and that there is not the least necessity for an Act of Parliament to secure high prices. Why, there has been a gentleman deeply interested in the business of farming, who has been in the gallery of this House, that I could quote. He is about the largest occupier of land in the country, and he was examined for three days before the Agricultural Committee of this House, when it sat last, having been called as a great authority amongst agricultural gentlemen. Well, he has been within the last few nights in the gallery of this House, and he has been wanting to be in the House that he might answer the silly things which he has heard from your side on the subject. He occupies 3,800 acres. He holds land in six counties. He is a receiver of rents in eight counties; and he states, that he is for the total, and immediate, and unconditional repeal of the Corn Laws as the best thing for the farmer. When we see such men as that in favour of a repeal of the Corn Laws, it certainly is not wonderful that you are so averse to inquiry. You never would give

any Committee: you would not hear any one at the bar of this House on the subject, because you knew that these persons would come forward and give evidence directly in opposition to your views. You would never face an inquiry. Those persons are ready to come, but you have none ready to call on your side. ["Oh, oh!"] "Oh!" why you never name such persons in support of your case: you are surely on your trial before the country now, and you should cite intelligent agriculturists in support of your views of protection. I venture to say now, what I said before, that if you go into a Committee of inquiry, that I will call farmers from every county in England—that I will call land agents, and every man who is competent to give evidence from his experience, and that they shall give evidence contrary to your views of the subject. ["Oh, oh."] You say "Oh;" why there is a club of land agents in this city, and I have reason to believe that the majority of its members are of opinion that a total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws will do no harm to the landed interest. One would have thought that the hon. Member for Essex and the hon. Member for Suffolk, who have both spoken—who plume themselves on being identified with the soil—who would be quite angry if they were not supposed to be so, would have given us some information. I listened with great interest to them, because I know how able they are upon this subject. The hon. Member for Essex (Sir J. Tyrrell), after cutting some very questionable jokes, in the first part of his speech, ended by reading a chapter from Dr. Arnold about men with one idea. Then there is the hon. Member for Suffolk. He was returned specially as the farmers' friend—as the man who knew more about the farmers than anybody else. I don't know whether anybody else did, but I confess I listened to what that hon. Gentleman said; and all I could collect was, that he was reading the Solicitor General's speech made some time ago at Cambridge. Those are two of the chief agricultural counties, and that is all we can collect from those two Members. Those hon. Gentlemen will go any length to turn out the Government, and to oppose the right hon. Gentleman's measure, and yet we cannot obtain a single notion from them as to the way in which the sliding-scale benefits agriculture. There is the Member for Norfolk: I see him in his place there. There is a very intelligent man in the county of Norfolk who has written a pamphlet, and who says if the landlords will do (what they will not do), and if you will make the tenants do (what they are not able to do), that we shall have plenty of corn without free trade. That gentleman, I dare say, is a constituent of the hon. Member for Norfolk: his name is Warnes. That gentleman has published a book, and he declares, that the farmers of the present day must take for their text, for their rule of proceeding, that low price is quite compatible with good agriculture; that they must never look to high prices, but must produce a great quantity, and must depend for success on low prices and plentiful crops. That doctrine is, I think, directly opposed to that of the hon. Member for that county, who, practically, by this law tells the farmer, "Never mind the cultivation, never mind how you manage your farm, because we will get you an Act of Parliament, and we will secure you high prices, which is all you want:" that is the object he is seeking to serve at this moment. Then I ask, if the House has heard, on this occasion, any great results from this system of protecting agriculture, which justify it? The hon. Member for Norfolk tells us of none. Do you point to the farmers or labourers as offering examples of its success? Why, we have scarcely heard a word said about the condition of the farmers during the discussion; but if you look at the speeches out of this House, you will collect from them that the farmer who has prospered during the last thirty years is so rare a bird, so strange an animal, that if he was seen, he should be stuffed and sent to the British Museum. It has actually been said at the agricultural meetings, that the farmer who has thriven under this system ought to be preserved in a Museum. Then, as to the labourers, have we had any evidence of their prosperity? We have been told that the Goatacre meeting was a thing got up by the Anti-Corn-Law League. That, however, is not the fact. The League had nothing whatever to do with that meeting. I know that that meeting was only one of a series of meetings which have been held for some years past by the labourers of Wiltshire, who have always declared the same thing, that they could not be worse off than they are, and that any change among them must be for the better. But look at the Reports of every Commission that has been appointed to inquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer, and you will see from 1824 down to 1843, the date of the

last Report, just exactly the same account of the agricultural labourers—that their condition is as bad physically as it is possible to be, and that they live under circumstances, the result of physical suffering, the most unfavourable to their morals and their happiness; and that this is particularly the case in the most agricultural counties. I wonder that the hon. Member for Suffolk did not allude to the agricultural labourers of his county, because they are specially mentioned in the Report of the year 1824, and have been constantly referred to since. In Suffolk there are more of what are called gentlemen farmers and of clergy than in any other county, and yet the people are described as being there as demoralized, and are subject to as much privation as in any other county in England. The hon. Member for Shrewsbury asks if the people have not thriven under this system of protection? I say they decidedly have not; and I ask why, if they have, we have had no account of that prosperity during the eleven days that this debate has been discussed; and why we have not been told how it could benefit the poor; and, in fact, why we have up to this moment been left with no better definition of the results of the system than that which was obtained from Lord Stanley in another place? Lord Stanley was asked what he meant by this system; and he was obliged to avow that it was a system that raised the rent of land, that raised the price of food, but did not raise the wages of labour. Well, then, I believe that Lord Stanley is your leader, and that you are all proud to acknowledge him to be so. The principles, therefore, which he has avowed are those which you have been fighting for eleven days past, and in support of which you are going to a division; a system that raises the price of food, raises the rent of land, but does nothing to benefit the labourer—a system which accounts for a prosperous farmer being such a rare bird that he ought to be stuffed and preserved; and why the condition of the agricultural labourer is a by-word of demoralization and distress. It is the exact result that you would expect from Lord Stanley's definition of raising the rent of land and the price of food without also raising the wages of labour. That is the definition of your own system, given by your own leader. Now, we ought to know what the general effect of this system is. We are legislating for the public at large, and we ought to know what the effect of this system is upon them. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department tells us that he has ascertained its effect. He has, in my opinion, most accurately stated it. The right hon. Baronet said that he had evidence which had been forced upon him, to show how the purpose of the protective system, namely, to secure high prices, affected the working classes and the community at large, if it succeeded. The right hon. Baronet states the result of his official observation, and you have avoided dealing with that point altogether. Yes; you have met it in one way; you have railed at the Ministers for treachery; you have charged them with letting the cat out of the bag. We have had a great deal of talk about a system; but you have not answered this case, and you have left yourselves up to this moment exposed to the charge of promoting a system which produces the effects which the right hon. Gentleman has told us, who has been in office during two periods—one, when food was dear through the operation of your law; and the other when it was cheap, the result of the blessings of Providence. He says that he has found, in one case, that in consequence of high prices the poor were in distress; that they were miserable; that they were tempted into crime; that the rate of mortality among them had increased; and that these misfortunes had fallen upon them from the success of protection. And when, by the bounty of God, your system has failed; and when you come to this House to complain that the price is low, and that high prices are necessary to your interest, and when you denounce the Minister, because you have not got a sufficient price for your produce; he tells you that, though food is low, the price of labour is high, that crime is diminished, and that death, disease, and all the miseries that before befel them are less; and that, therefore, he has come to the conclusion that the success of your protective system is calculated to promote the misery of the people, and its failure ensured to them prosperity and happiness. To this moment there is not one of you who has given an answer on this point to the right hon. Baronet—not one. When the right hon. Baronet rose last summer, and stated all these results, there was not one of you who answered him. When he said that, under a high price of provisions, wages did not increase, but that much misery and destitution followed, you ought to have risen and said, that low-priced provisions do not

promote the comforts of the people. You ought to have risen and said, what I have often heard in this House before, that high prices of provisions improve the condition of the labouring class. But you did not do that; because if you had you felt that nobody would have believed it. You submitted to his proposition then; you tacitly agreed with what he said; and who could believe that any man who intended to show his face in the country again would continue a system which he said was the source of such calamity whenever it succeeded success? I say, that when the right hon. Gentleman made that speech last May, it was a subject of general remark that the Corn Laws were doomed. If he had said then that high prices of provision were good for the poor, and that none of these blessings had fallen to them from low price, you would have a good right now to charge him with inconsistency. I maintain that the right hon. Gentleman did then overthrow the system of enhancing the price of food by law. He told you that misery and misfortune had been the result of it; but not one rose to contradict the statement which the right hon. Gentleman had made, but, on the contrary, some country Gentleman rose on the other side, and bore out his statement. Even in the agricultural districts it was seen that the effect of high prices of food was to produce misery and misfortune; but when the prices of food fell it brought the greatest advantage to the agricultural labourers. Well, now, I say that it is a very serious charge, which ought to be met before the close of this debate. I say that the charge involved in that statement ought to be met, otherwise the indication of your good fortune is that of the misery of others. You should not look to the prices current, but to the calendars and to the rate of mortality, and the misfortunes that befal man, in order to know whether you are well off under this law, or whether you should contend for its maintenance. According to your system, a man should congratulate you if you were told that the people were miserable, and dying of disease, occasioned by the high price and scarcity of food. I do not say that this is so; but if you do not answer the right hon. Gentleman, you are open to the charge. You have had now eleven days' debate without meeting that one fact. I say that the right hon. Gentleman stated that to you; that the noble Lord the Member for London tells you, in his letter to the city of London, that the intention of the law is to make food dear, and that the effect of that is, in his opinion, precisely what the Home Secretary has told you it is. You cannot escape from that purpose of the law, because there is no meaning in the law, if it is not to make food dear. It is very well for the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Devon to say, "God forbid that the price of corn should be high; he does not wish scarcity: that he knew it was a great misfortune"—and all that sort of thing. It is all very well to say so; but how is he going to vote, and how has he voted on previous occasions? I ask this because there has been talking about the Corn Law for twenty-five years; and there has been no other purpose ever in view but to maintain price. I refer him to the year 1822, from that time to the present, and to the fact that prices never have been low during that period, but that the country Gentlemen have come here to complain: and, on the other hand, I say, they have never been high but that the people have come here to complain of distress. In 1822, the price of food was lower than ever it was before. The hon. Gentleman the Member for North Devon must remember all that took place then; that it was made a subject of positive grievance by the county Members, that prices were so low. But these low prices were not the result of importation. We have heard to-night that cheapness produced by importation and abundant harvests, are two very different things. I say that low prices are what you have always complained of. You never distinguish between low prices and the causes that produce low prices. I forget who it was—but I believe it was the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Mr. B. Denison) who attempted to-night to draw a difference between the cheapness produced by foreign importation and an abundant harvest. Ah, you will do well to look to the years 1822, 1835, and 1845. I say there are three distinct periods when the prices have been low, not from importation, but from the care of God, of which you have come down here and complained. ["No!"] Why, it is of no use denying the fact; there are the records up-stairs which will prove it. Lord Castlereagh came down and proposed a scheme for making food dear. He suggested a vote of money, in order to buy up the "surplus food," as it was called, to secure a remunerating price to the landed interest. There was a vote of money proposed in the House to relieve the landed interest from the support of the poor. I say that in 1835 and

1836 there were low prices that proceeded from good harvests and nothing else; and yet the Marquess of Chandos came here and proposed a repeal of the malt tax, and that the House should go into Committee upon the grievous state of agriculture; and I believe there were Committees appointed in both Houses of Parliament, to consider the unparalleled distress of the country party, although not from importation, but simply from an abundant harvest. I ask, what was the meaning of that two hours' speech which we heard last year from the hon. Member for Somerset, flourishing the prices current in his hand, and complaining that the Government had not secured them a better price of beef, flour, bacon, veal, pork, &c. He did not complain of low prices occasioned by importation, because there was less imported during that year than for some time before; but he stated that there was distress owing to prices falling, and on account of a more abundant harvest than usual. I say, therefore, that what you complain of is low prices, and that the object of the Corn Law is high prices. I say, again, that after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department, who says that he cannot resist the evidence that high prices produce distress, because wages are not increased in a corresponding ratio, you must say why you contend for the continuance of a system that is intended to raise price. But then it is contended that the Corn Laws are not only a protection to agriculture, but are also to protect domestic industry. What do you mean by "domestic industry?" It must mean something, I suppose, in which the working classes are concerned. But have you any evidence that the working classes agree with you in that view of the case—that the working classes believe themselves interested in a system that produces all that misery which the right hon. Gentleman says takes place whenever this scheme succeeds? Have you any evidence, I say, of the working classes agreeing with you? Has any Gentleman quoted the opinions of the working classes in support of the position that the Corn Laws are beneficial to domestic industry—that they are satisfied with the idea that they shall benefit with the high price of food? I tell you there is not a single town in all England where the working men are not against you, and have not more or less declared themselves against your doctrine. I believe the address published by the working men at Sheffield, agreed to in an open-air meeting, and to their fellow workmen throughout the country, was assented to by them all. They say—

"These laws have deranged our monetary system, making numbers of our manufacturers bankrupts, checking the natural current of trade, and reducing thousands of families to misery and starvation; nor do they produce any real good to the great mass of our agricultural population; for those who till the earth, and make it lovely and fruitful by their labour, are only allowed the slave's share of the many blessings they produce."

Again, at Liverpool in 1843, some of the working classes undertook to inquire into the condition of their own class then residing in that town, and the result of the inquiry into the condition of 5,000 families in that town, which was verified by some respectable merchants at the time, was the following:—

"That the labouring classes are in a state of great distress. That their condition has been getting worse for the last four years. That we find that disease and crime bear a relation to the price of food. That high prices of provisions compel the people to live on coarser food, thus injuring their health and abridging their comforts. That manufacturers and dealers are fast sinking, from an inability in the bulk of the population to purchase from them those articles necessary to their existence. That we find that high wages and full employment are coincident with low prices of provisions, and that high prices of provisions are coincident with low wages and want of employment. 1052 families are supported by pawning, charity, or prostitution. 1017 families are supported by savings, credit, relations, and casual employment. Other families are now on the parish: out of 5,000 families, 3,600 come from the agricultural districts, not being able to find employment in their own districts."

That is the way the Corn Law supports domestic industry. Why, it is surely a mockery and an insult to tell the poor that you stop this measure to promote their industry in the town and in the country. There are some things that have been said certainly against the measure, and which, perhaps, I should not notice, but that the authority of the Member for Sunderland, who has used them, may influence somebody. The hon. Member for Sunderland is very much alarmed at this measure, and he has used all his authority to frighten the House and the country upon three grounds. In the first place, he is afraid that the sum at which wheat can be brought into this country from abroad will be too low for agriculture here—he is afraid of the injury which may be done to our home trade—and he is afraid of the effect on the exchanges. I mention the hon. Gentleman because he has a singular

position at present; and, owing to the great success of his undertakings, whatever falls from him is taken to be gospel by some. Now, the hon. Gentleman told us the other night that he had brought foreign corn into this country at 25*s.* a quarter. The hon. Gentleman says in 1837 he was a party to a transaction himself, in which wheat, after paying the charges of freight and duty, was lodged here at 25*s.* It was impossible to doubt the truth of that which any Gentleman says he did himself, and quite impossible to doubt anything which the Member for Sunderland says; but when the hon. Gentleman states a fact of that kind, he wants the country at large to draw a general conclusion from it. He wants people to suppose when food can be purchased and consumed at 25*s.* a quarter, and can be imported at that price from abroad, that the farmers of this country cannot compete with the foreign grower. That is the purpose for which the statement was used; or, if not, it was of no use at all. I think that the hon. Gentleman ought to have stated in the first place where it was that he imported his grain from, as during the last week his statement has been used in different papers, as if it was the general import price of foreign wheat. I believe that the hon. Gentleman opposite will admit that we must import a considerable quantity of grain from Poland and Russia, and that Dantzic must be one of the ports from which we must receive grain. We shall have to get a million, or two millions, or, as some people say, four millions; and we must depend on that port to a great extent. I happen to have here an authority which I defy any one to question, namely, the prices of grain at Dantzic during the whole of the year 1837, in which year the hon. Gentleman imported his wheat at 25*s.* a quarter, and the price of freights from Dantzic to Liverpool or London. [Mr. Hudson was here understood to say, that the wheat which he had purchased came from Odessa.] But as I understood the hon. Gentleman's statement, wheat could be bought for general consumption at 25*s.* the quarter; and this fact is of little use if it has only reference to damaged wheat at Odessa, because I say that you must depend for a large portion of your wheat upon Dantzic. The hon. Gentleman says he brought grain here—good grain—capable of being consumed as human food, and brought into the market at 25*s.* I say that the finest quality, capable of being consumed there, never was sold at Dantzic during that year under 29*s.* a quarter. [An hon. Member: "Odessa."] But the hon. Member is telling you the free-trade price of wheat, and you all began triumphing on that account, because you believe that it will be inferred that wheat, which ought to be at 56*s.* here, as you say, will be only 25*s.* in future. Now the prices of wheat at Dantzic for the highest and lowest qualities, during the year 1837, were as follow; —I find that in 1837 the prices in Dantzic were—

	Highest quality.			Lowest quality.		
April	31*s.*	0*d.*	per quarter.	23*s.*	5*d.*	per quarter.
May	32	0	,,	24	0	,,
June	33	0	,,	25	5	,,
July	30	0	,,	20	0	,,
Aug.	32	3	,,	20	0	,,
Sept.	32	0	,,	24	0	,,
Oct.	29	6	,,	23	5	,,
Nov.	30	0	,,	25	5	,,
Dec.	29	0	,,	28	0	,,

During the same period the prices of freights from Dantzic to London and Liverpool were never less than 4*s.* 9*d.*, and sometimes were 6*s.*, and the other charges 3*s.*, and yet the hon. Gentleman tells you that if the trade was open, foreign grain would be imported here at 25*s.* a quarter: this he infers from what took place in the year 1837, after our ports had been closed for four years. There is another peculiarity in that year—namely, that a very large amount of Baltic wheat which was grown, went from Dantzic to America—which makes him still more fortunate in having been able to land one cargo here from somewhere for 25*s.* But the hon. Gentleman is one of that school which says there is no objection to an importation of foreign corn if it be not paid for in gold. Well, then, I will just tell the hon. Gentleman what was the case when we were importing grain between the years 1840 and 1844. In 1839, there is no doubt that the bullion fell from upwards of 9,000,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* in the course of six months, and owing to a large importation; but our importations for the three years were as large, but were regular; and the hon. Gentleman will see that the bullion returned to this country, and the regular importation of wheat was paid for by manufactures. In 1840, the import of wheat was 2,600,000 quarters, but the bullion in the Bank had increased to 3,500,000*l.* from 2,000,000*l.* In 1841, the import of wheat was 2,300,000 quarters, but the bullion was in the Bank in that year 4,900,000*l.* And in 1842 we imported 4,206,000 quarters, and at that time the bullion in the

Bank of England had increased to 10,000,000*l.*, our exports had also increased in a corresponding ratio; and these exports to the great grain countries took place when our exports to all other countries failed. But without reading all the particulars, I will just state what was the result of the exports before we began to import grain from the grain-growing countries down to the last year. In 1837, the export of manufactures was 12,800,000*l.*; in 1842, after we had had four years' import of grain, the exports of our manufactures was 16,800,000*l.* This increase of trade with foreign countries took place when our exports to every country were falling off, showing that after the first year of a great and sudden demand for articles we had not before imported, there arose a regular trade. Sir, the hon. Member for Sunderland has referred to what has been alluded to by other Members in this debate, the value of the home trade. It is a very common argument with agricultural Gentlemen that the home trade is far better than the foreign trade, and that we ought to be careful how we deal with it. Sir, that is our case: it is because the home trade is so good that we ought to be careful not to injure it, and nothing injures it so much as high prices of corn. The hon. Member is well acquainted with the midland counties; and I therefore select the evidence of the Mayor of Leicester, a large manufacturer, given before the Import Duty Committee of this House, for his information on this point:—

"In speaking of the consumption of Leicester, you say that the market has been falling off for two years. Are the Committee to understand that has been from the increasing poverty of the industrious classes of the country?—I do imagine that to be the case. Have the artisans been obliged to give more labour, and to do more work for the same wages in consequence of the pressure which has existed in Leicester?—Certainly, wages have been lower in consequence of it, and I never saw anything like the distress that there has been among the artisans employed in the town of Leicester. To what do you ascribe the decreased demand for their goods?—To the high prices of provisions, which have diminished the means of the labourer to purchase, because if his food takes a large proportion of his wages, it leaves him less to lay out in clothing, furniture, and other articles. Have you any experience, with respect to the demand for your goods, when provisions have been low? Yes; it is the invariable rule in our trade that when provisions are low, we have a good demand; it is a rule observed by the manufacturers, and established as a maxim in the trade. If the harvest is good, we may have a better home demand; but if we have a bad harvest, I do not know what will become of the population, for it will make corn high, and leave the workmen destitute of employment, and the distress will be very great. Ours is a home manufacture depending upon the home market; and upon the well-being of the working population generally the prosperity of the manufactures of Leicester entirely depends. Are you quite certain that the falling-off in the demand for Leicester manufacture amongst the purely agricultural population has been as great as amongst the manufacturing population? The falling-off has been as great. The hosiers who travel there tell me that the wages of agricultural labourers are so low, that it leaves them nothing to lay out in manufactures. They have first to obtain the necessaries of life, and it leaves them nothing to lay out in stockings. Then although the price of food has increased, their wages have not increased in proportion? Certainly not in the agricultural districts; in the manufacturing districts wages are lower than they were two years ago when food was lower. Would you attach any importance to the protecting duties being removed which you are said to have yourself? The bulk of our manufacturers would be glad to see them removed. We passed a resolution to that effect at a large meeting held in the spring of the last year. We had a large town meeting, and resolutions were passed declaring their willingness to abandon all protective duties on manufactures, if all prohibitory and all protecting duties on agricultural produce were also removed. Was that resolution the result of the opinion of the general aggregate of the manufacturers in Leicester and the neighbourhood?—It was."

Facts of this kind were elicited on the Import Duty Committee, from nearly every manufacturer of articles of general consumption; and we urge them in opposition to what is stated in defence of artificial prices as necessary for the home trade. Now I ask your attention to what it is which has been said at the other side, in reply to these great economical considerations which have been brought before them by the Government, and to propositions which have been from time to time submitted for years past to the same effect, by hon. Gentlemen at this side. It has been stated, and stated truly, by the right hon. Gentleman, that the population of this country is rapidly increasing—and that the census shows that there is no chance of finding employment for them, except from commerce and manufacture. Now I ask the House to attend to the answers which the hon. Member for Northamptonshire and the hon. Member for Bristol make to that statement. Commissioners of the Crown recently reporting the results of their inquiry, have declared that produce equal to that of the county of Surrey is annually required to feed the increased population of this country, and places as large as Birmingham and Manchester to find them room for shelter. The hon. Member for Bristol says, that manufactures have been carried a great deal too far; that we ought

rather to consider the propriety of restricting our manufacturing districts; and the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, who is the leader of the body of protectionists, and who undertakes to speak for that party, and to tell them the views which they ought to take, and the opinions they ought to pronounce, as opposed to this side of the House—he (the hon. Member for Northamptonshire) says that we may talk as we please about the increase of our population, and about our want of food for that increased number, but that the true policy for this country is not to import food from abroad, and that we ought to confine ourselves to native produce, and to a system under which we produce three quarters of corn, where we might produce five. Now let the country distinctly understand the political economy of the other side. They say the manufacturing districts are increasing too fast in this country, and that their limits ought to be confined, whilst, concurrently with that restriction, they also say that we ought to produce less food at home instead of more, and that we ought to import less food from abroad notwithstanding the increase of population. That is the argument which is used by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and deliberately stated in their organs of the *Quarterly Review*, *Standard*, and *Herald*. We see it there stated that if the manufacturing districts were razed to the ground, if half the metropolis were razed to the ground, the country would be greater, happier, and more prosperous. And consistently with such views this measure is opposed, it being alleged that we want no more manufacturing towns—that we should not produce more food at home or import more from abroad, however rapidly the population may increase. That is what you say are your economical principles. We say that we want to provide food for an increasing population; and we find, by the census returns, that you give less employment to the population in the agricultural districts now than you did in 1831; and, in answer to that, you say that we ought to have fewer manufactories and less production of food. Now I ask, if men are fit to be loose who entertain such notions, or if such men ought to be allowed to legislate for the country? And yet these are the persons who propose to form a Government; who say, "If you will only throw out this measure we will form a Government that will upon our principles provide for the exigencies of the country, will provide for the people;" who propose to diminish the manufacturing districts, and to produce less food in the country. How do you propose to get the power to carry out these doctrines? You cannot depend upon the opinion of the country: no, you will say you depend upon your territorial influence, small constituencies, and the House of Lords. You think that by your influence with the counties and the small boroughs, and with the influence of the House of Lords, you will be able to throw out this measure of the Government, and to uphold monopoly. This it is which has induced you to keep up the debate for eleven days; and it is with a hope of effecting that object that you will go to the division to-morrow night. You hope by these means, by your influence with dependent voters, and the support of the House of Lords, to throw out the Government measure. But let me ask, did you ever consider how you were to maintain the Corn Laws after you have defeated this Government? The Corn La s must be supported now by force or by opinion. ["Oh!"] Is there any other way? You have already tried by force to support it. You tried force when the law was introduced; and four years after it was carried you maintained it by force. I say the people were put down in this town by force in 1815, for openly resisting that law; and at Manchester also, in 1819, four years after its enactment, they were cut down for calling for its repeal. They were threatened again in 1830, when they were suffering dreadfully from its effects. It was contemplated again to stifle their voice by force; but the time was past in 1830 for putting down opinion by the sword. It was said in high quarters that there was a way of putting down the people if they ventured to express an opinion against this law. The rotten boroughs had during former Governments the power to put down the people. In 1830 the time had come for the rotten boroughs to be put down themselves, and they were so. The people, finding their condition unimproved, and their interests neglected, became disappointed with the results of the Reform Bill; and they organized themselves to obtain a further extension of the suffrage; and when a scarcity from bad harvests occurred in 1839—which since the Corn Laws had passed had been periodical—they were indisposed to join the middle classes in demanding the repeal of the Corn Laws alone. This feeling was turned to account by the protection societies, and every thing

which they could do to mislead the people, and to direct their attention from the operation of the Corn Law, was attempted by them. Every thing which could delude the minds of the people on that subject was done by those societies and their emissaries, and by their partisans in Parliament. It was their proceedings, indeed, and the deceptions practised upon the people to reconcile them to this law, that really drew out the Anti-Corn-Law League: it was this that caused them to exert themselves as they had done; that it was which led them to do so much in circulating, not any new principles, not their own notions, but the deliberate opinions of the most enlightened men that ever the country produced; and induced them to make those extraordinary exertions which the country had witnessed to influence public opinion against all restrictions on commerce, and, in particular, for the total abolition of the Corn Law. With what result the efforts of late years have been attended is now learnt; and it is obvious to every rational mind that you cannot longer support it either by force or by delusion; and if you wish to support this law, you must do it by other means. You are now quarrelling with a Minister who is honestly applying himself to the settlement of this question. I ask, if you have devised any means yourselves—if you have contemplated how you are to maintain it, under those circumstances from which the Minister has shrunk, namely, the recurrence of a period of scarcity? If a season of scarcity should occur again, and that the people under the pressure of that scarcity should call upon you, as they have always done on former occasions, for political reforms; or if it should so happen that the people rose up against this law, what state would such a Government as you could form be placed in under such circumstances, having refused to alter this law, about the evils of which they have no longer any doubt, and against which all mankind are agreed? I only ask you just to imagine such a Government as we have seen described—a Government with a noble Duke at its head, and consisting of some hon. Gentlemen whom I see opposite—in what position would such a Government find itself in a period of scarcity and tumult, and the responsibility placed upon them of restoring and maintaining peace, order, and contentment? Can we suppose a Gentleman placed in a more pitiable, I will not say despicable, situation? What would you do? Would it not be exactly as it has been before? Would you not come to the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, and pray of him to resume the reins of power and restore peace and order, by requesting him to do what you are now quarrelling with him for attempting? The hon. Member for Rutlandshire blamed the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government for not having stuck to his guns. "Stick to his guns!" What Minister, let me ask, would have stuck to his guns under similar circumstances? Would you stick to your guns if starvation was spreading throughout the country, and you were not able to put the people down by force, nor to persuade them that the starvation they suffered was not your fault, and was not the result of your legislation? Would you who blame the right hon. Baronet stick to your guns under such circumstances, and after it is clear to the whole world that sticking to your guns means only sticking to your own interests? Why, the fact is, that the protection that you require is protection from yourselves, and that the right hon. Gentleman is providing this for you, though you cannot see it. Other countries have been referred to on the opposite side; and I remember the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, at the commencement of the Session, said, he was not afraid so much of agitation with respect to this question, or of high prices, but he was afraid of such men as Neckar or Turgot getting into the Government. There is some analogy, I admit, between the position of this country, as regards this question, and the state of France at a former period, when Turgot became Minister. The hon. Member for Dorchester, who expressed his fear of a sccond Turgot in our Government, is, I am sure, acquainted with the character of that Minister, and the views he entertained with respect to his country at that time. He was a very sagacious man. I venture to say, notwithstanding the pretensions of the economists of the present day, that there is no man possessing more comprehensive views now than he possessed upon national economy at that time. Turgot was called to power in 1774, and no man could have obtained it entertaining more honest and intelligent views than he did. He undertook the government of the country after writing a very remarkable letter to the King, pointing out to him the difficulties he should have to contend with in his administration of public affairs. He stated in that letter that he despaired of doing good; that he knew he should be calumniated; that a confederacy

would be formed against him because he should represent to the King that a certain class ought not to live on the substance of the nation; and, after dilating upon his difficulties, and expressing his confidence in the good faith and justice of the King, he said he accepted office, desiring to die with the character of having acted honestly and having done as much good as possible for his country. Now what was the first act of his Ministry, and which probably is what excites the fears of the hon. Member opposite? He repealed the Corn Laws in France. He said there were two things which should be taken care of by every country if it was desirous of escaping bankruptcy and revolution; and this he said, be it remembered, fifteen years before the revolution took place in France. The two things which he said ought to be cared for were, that the revenue should be maintained, and a scarcity of food avoided; and above all things for this purpose, that trade in corn should be free. Consistently with these views, the first act of Turgot in 1775 was to set free the internal corn trade of France, and place on record his views of the expediency of setting free the external corn trade. What was the case then in France? It is really worth the while of hon. Gentlemen opposite to observe it. When he came into power he found that each province was made by its corn law dependent upon itself for its supply. Each province was protected from the abundance of its neighbour, and thus they were constantly exposed to all the evils of scarcity, leading to riot, misery, and confusion. He removed the barriers to this trade between the provinces: he then proceeded to place the finances of the country upon a sounder basis; and having attempted thus boldly and wisely to strike at the two great causes of danger and evil—let the cause of his fall be observed; because, if care be not taken, the same may await those in this country who would act with similar courage and wisdom. It was, if he remembered rightly, in Condorcet's Life of Turgot, that the combination which was formed against him was described; and it appeared to have included all those who lived on the revenue without rendering any service in return—who profited by abuses of all kinds in the State—farmers of the public income, foolish people about society, women of fashion, and young nobles. That was the description of persons who were opposed to his policy, and combined against Turgot, and against every Minister from 1775 to 1789, who foresaw the consequences of the system which he was anxious to reform. Turgot complained, and wished to prevent them. That was the Minister whom the hon. Member for Dorsetshire feared might be imitated by a Minister of this country. Mr. Carlyle, in one of his recent works, had referred to the sentiments of the privileged classes in France in the year 1787, and had represented some of them as saying, "that they could not live upon the rents of their estates alone; that they could not parade themselves at Court; that they could not maintain their station, unless they had something more than the natural profits of their own possessions; and that they could only sustain their order and their usual expenditure by privileges and exemptions to which the rest of the community were not entitled:" and they would support no Minister that refused to support them in these pretensions and views; and every Minister who disputed them was driven from power from the time of Turgot till 1788. In that year, however, the harvest was bad throughout France; and in 1789 the people were threatened with famine: then came riot, disturbance, and speedily in their train a comprehensive change, such as was referred to by the Member for Shrewsbury the other night, that struck deep into the roots of society, and effected vast changes in the relations of different classes. As hon. Gentlemen opposite have referred to this period, let them study it and take warning by it; for I declare that with the deep-rooted conviction which the people have of the character and purpose of this law, I know nothing that would enable the Government to support its authority in this country if placed again under the circumstances of scarcity of food and a failure of revenue; and I ask you to consider, when you reflect upon what you have experienced of late years of the effect of scarcity, whether the right hon. Baronet is not, in proposing this measure, fulfilling the conditions of true Conservatism; and, whether you can, in professing that character yourselves, and in the absence of any security against the recurrence of scarcity, be justified in the course you are taking; for remember you have not proposed a single measure of security yourselves against a time of scarcity. You heard the right hon. Baronet opposite say what he apprehended from it; that he dreads the very recollection of the last period of scarcity, and insecurity, and sedition; that he is

therefore desirous to prevent the recurrence of such periods; but you have offered no security against their recurrence. You have taken no precaution; and mind that, after all the discussions which have taken place on this question, the enlightenment of the people on this subject, it is impossible to deceive them again, and they will hereafter hold you strictly responsible for what occurs. Recollect that the system you wish to maintain is to prevent the growth of food in other countries, for the supply of the wants of our population; and from this circumstance you cannot consider yourselves released from responsibility for at least two or three years to come. There is something like famine already existing in Ireland; and you are not sure that there may not be a bad harvest next year. What do you mean to do if there should be a bad harvest, and, owing to the discouragements you have given to other countries to produce for our markets, that there should be little to be obtained from abroad? If the people are distressed and without food, and call on you for supplies, what do you mean to do? You have undertaken to feed them, and they are not fed. What answer will you give in 1846, and 1847, and 1848, if distress should ensue? Surely there is sense in taking this into your consideration. In a period of scarcity it would not be merely a question of Corn Law. People are then in a peculiar state of mind. Men's minds are in no ordinary state when suffering from want. Her Majesty's Ministers are fully alive to this fact, and contemplate with horror and alarm, as they avow it, the recurrence of such a period; and they are therefore taking steps to prevent it. They know that when men are made desperate by distress, and driven to madness by suffering and by privations of those who are dear to them, that they will accept too readily any causes that are assigned for their misfortune, and will too easily, perhaps, grasp at any remedy that promises them relief; and it is for the interest of the aristocracy of this country, that the public should not be placed under such circumstances: for most surely it is for their interest to avert the public mind from reflecting upon the manner in which they have been governed for the half century past. My noble Friend the Member for London has referred to the immortal services the aristocracy have rendered to this country. I do not deny that such services have been rendered by them. I am glad to hear that such has been the case; and from not being so well versed in the ancient annals of this country as my noble Friend, I cannot dispute it; but I think if there should recur another period of anger and distress, that the people of this country might be forgetful of such services, and would be disposed to reflect chiefly upon that period of some forty or fifty years past, of which they have themselves some immediate cognizance; and I cannot believe that any candid mind could come to any other conclusion than that, with the government in their hand, they have wielded the powers of the Legislature against the industry, the energy and intelligence of the people; that they have been faithless to their trust in Parliament; that through this law they have sought unhallowed gains reckless of means; and that they ever have proved themselves blind to the destiny of this great nation. I therefore conjure them at this moment and at the present opportunity, to consult their own true interests, and to sacrifice selfish prejudice to the cause of justice by a hearty concurrence in the measures proposed by the Government, and by the abolition *in toto* of a law, which, as long as a vestige of it remains, will only be an evidence of their shame. Lose the occasion, and I venture to predict that they will follow the fate of every one who has ever sought, or for a while succeeded in trampling upon, or tyrannising over this race and this nation, amongst whom it is their great fortune to be born, and over whom it ought to have been their pride to rule with justice and intelligence.

Mr. G. BANKES moved the Adjournment of the Debate.

Mr. HUDSON wished to make a single observation in explanation of a remark which had fallen from him in the course of that debate. He thought he had distinctly explained that when he spoke of 26*s.* a quarter for corn, the probable average in a fair season would be from 35*s.* to 40*s.* a quarter. If the hon. Gentleman was not satisfied with the 25*s.* a quarter, he (Mr. Hudson) could hand him over the name of a gentleman who bought at 22*s.*

Mr. W. B. FERRAND said, that he had been informed that a personal attack was made on him that evening by no less than four Members on the other side of the House. He had received no intimation that such an attack was meditated, or he should have been present to repel it. He begged then to state that he should be

in his place to-morrow at five o'clock, and quite prepared to defend himself from any charge that might be brought against him.

Lord J. RUSSELL expressed a hope that the debate might be brought to a close to-morrow, on account of the very great length to which it had already extended.

Colonel SIBTHORP said, that having failed in several attempts which he had made to address the House on the measure of the right hon. Baronet, he would now ask two or three questions. Before he did so, he could not help remarking on the extraordinary position in which the country was placed in consequence of the absence of so many of the allies of the right hon. Baronet from that House. There was at present no Secretary for the Colonies in that House; there was no Secretary for Ireland within the walls of that House; there was no Attorney General for Ireland—no Solicitor General for Ireland in that House. What a strange position the sister kingdom must feel itself in when hon. Gentlemen like himself had no opportunity of putting such questions as might be deemed necessary to those official persons! He had a right to presume that the office of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies, was of great importance—the salary, he believed, was 5,000*l.* a year; and how then could he be spared from that House? With respect to the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, he admitted he had gone down to the election to oppose him. As to his tenants, he did not know how they voted, for he never pressed them to vote one way or another; but he believed there was hardly a doubt as to what they did. They voted against the noble Lord, and in support and protection of their just rights. The Government was then without having a Secretary for Ireland in that House. They had also lost a Lord of the Admiralty. It was very clear to the public and to the House that the First Lord of the Treasury—the Prime Minister of England—could not place in that House a single Lord of the Admiralty, even though that appointment was worth 1,200*l.* per annum. The same might be said with regard to the office of the Clerk to the Ordnance, which a noble Lord had resigned; and he had been informed that there had been vacancies for two Lords of the Treasury, consequent upon the retirement of two Gentlemen whose high-mindedness had gained universal approbation. Those Gentlemen had retired because they had felt it to be no honour to wear the livery of the Government at the cost of a sacrifice of the very principles which had brought that Government into office and power. Again, he saw in the metropolis vast improvements in progress, which were said to be adopted under the cognizance and superintendence of the Office of Woods and Forests. He should like to know who now represented that department, to the head of which he believed there was attached a salary of about 4,400*l.*? If the office was not filled, it would be desirable to know whether the amount was to be passed to the Consolidated Fund, or to be kept in reserve as a fund for the individual who might succeed in obtaining a seat in that House. What must be the opinion formed by neighbouring nations from this state of things? Would they not say that the men selected by the Prime Minister to fill important offices, were pronounced by the constituent body to be unworthy of a seat in the Assembly of the Representatives of the people? It was, therefore, the bounden duty of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government to satisfy the House and the country as to the situation in which both would probably be placed in the course of a very few days. He had been told the office of one of the Lords of the Treasury, and that of Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, had been disposed of; but how disposed of, remained to be explained. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), who used to call his friends together on great emergencies, had said that the feeling of that body evinced in the years 1841, 1842, and 1843, never could be effaced from his memory. He thought that it would be well if the month of May, 1838, still lived in the recollection of the right hon. Baronet. In the month of that year, the right hon. Baronet was met by 313 Gentlemen, whom he called Conservatives, and to that assembly he intimated what were his views, and at that time confidence was placed in the right hon. Baronet. They, however, now found that too much confidence had been reposed in that quarter. From all that had since transpired, it did not seem at all unlikely that while the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) was expounding his Anti-Corn-Law views in Covent-garden theatre, the right hon. Baronet was hid at the wings, or, if not, in the secrecy of the green-room. It was not at all unlikely that the right hon. Baronet the Secretary

for the Home Department and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War (Mr. S. Herbert) had been there also. At all events, many important offices were not represented in that House; and he must assert that a great country like this ought not to be left with the Treasury bench in that House only kept warm until occupants could be found for it.

On the Question that the Debate be Adjourned,

Mr. SPOONER said, that he cordially agreed with the noble Lord the Member for London, in hoping that the debate might terminate to-morrow night; but at the same time he could not give his consent to its so terminating, unless hon. Gentlemen had an opportunity of delivering their sentiments on this question. He was now speaking on the question of Adjournment. He had risen several times to address the House, but he had not succeeded in catching the Speaker's eyes. He wished to explain to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton the motives which would actuate him in giving his support to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bristol. He would not undertake to address the House at that hour. Representing, as he did, a large manufacturing population, he would require to have an opportunity of explaining the grounds upon which he would vote. He could not go on now. His object was to permanently lower the price of food; and his objection to the present measure was, that it would delude the people by holding out that bread would be cheap when it would be relatively dear. He agreed with the noble Lord that the debate had lasted long enough; but he could not give his consent to its being concluded unless he had an opportunity of explaining his views.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at a quarter to One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 27, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—*Reported.* County Works Presentments (Ireland).

3*a.* and passed. Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. By the Earl of Radnor, from Welshpool, and several other places, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws; and from Agriculturists and others in the Parish of Tannadice, and several other places, in favour of Free Trade.

LAW OF INSOLVENCY.

Lord BROUGHAM, pursuant to notice given yesterday, presented a petition from Colonel Rochford, a highly respectable Irish gentleman, and claimant of an earldom, complaining of a very great defect in the law of insolvency. The defect was one which required the interference of the Legislature; and the Insolvent Commissioners entirely agreed in the propriety of making that interference. A person who came within the operation of the Insolvent Act, had all his estate conveyed out of him to his assignees. In the present case the assignees were satisfied, but they could not reconvey until the insolvency was superseded. Now the Commissioners had no power to enforce a reconveyance of the estate by the assignees; and an Act ought, therefore to be passed, giving the Commissioners power to require the assignees to reconvey, upon receiving a proper indemnity. He wished, therefore, to give a general notice, that he should bring in a Bill in a week or so on the subject.

DRAINAGE, &c. (IRELAND) BILL.

The Order of the Day for going into Committee on this Bill having been read,

Lord MONTEAGLE said, that he had often stated his strong approval of the conduct of the Government in bringing these Bills forward, which he considered of great importance to the country, and therefore he should not be suspected of any desire to throw any difficulty in the way of their eventual success. At the same time he did not wish that the Government or the Irish people should deceive themselves by thinking that these measures would produce the advantages which were expected from their operation, unless there were increased facilities given for carrying them into effect. The Government relied on the assistance of the Board of Works, which was originally composed of three persons appointed for the performance of certain duties, which had been since greatly increased by the consolidation of other public bodies with the Board. The last two or three years had added greatly to their labours; and their Lordships would hardly believe that with the increase of duties which had fallen upon the Board, the strength of the establishment had not been increased beyond the addition of two or three persons. He warned the Government, therefore, that they would strangely deceive themselves in carrying the present measures into operation, unless they increased the strength of the Board of Public Works. It would be necessary to keep a very strict watch over the expenditure of the money; the

accounts must be carefully audited, and every possible check given to malversation. All this could not be done by an over-tasked Board. If it were not done, moral evil would be produced, where physical good was intended. He had taken the liberty of calling the attention of the noble Earl (the Earl of St. Germans) to the subject, though it was rather hard upon him; but the Irish Government was at present in such a peculiar state that there was no opportunity of asking any question about Ireland in either House of Parliament. He repeated, that it would be utterly impossible for their Lordships to expect any good whatever from the Bill, unless they strengthened the machinery for carrying it into effect. He entreated, therefore, the noble Earl, as the organ of the Government in that House, to take immediate means for promoting this object, or all hope of relieving the distress of the people of Ireland would fail.

The Earl of DEVON agreed entirely with the views of his noble Friend who had last spoken, and was anxious to bear his testimony to their accuracy. It would be well also if the people of Ireland were reminded that nothing could be done by passing Acts of Parliament, unless they were seconded by individual efforts. There was no doubt that a great portion of the soil of Ireland might be made infinitely more productive than it was at present, if greater efforts were made to improve its cultivation.

The Earl of ST. GERMANS did not mean to dispute the assertion made by the noble Lord (Lord Monteagle) that the establishment of the Board of Works had not been increased in proportion to the increase of labour cast upon it; and he was therefore prepared to say that Her Majesty's Government would consider the subject, with a view to an efficient and permanent augmentation of that establishment. In the meantime it was proposed to add to the strength of the Board of Works a number of military engineers, not as a Government arrangement, but with a view to meet the existing emergency.

Lord COTTENHAM took occasion to remark that the machinery of the Bill was totally inadequate to protect the interests of remainder-men, infants, and mortgagees; and he submitted to the noble Earl (Earl of St. Germans) that it would be advisable to introduce a provision similar to that which was inserted last week in the Public Works Bill, rendering the consent of the Court of Chancery necessary when the interests of such parties were affected.

The Earl of ST. GERMANS was unwilling to clog the Bill with such a provision, as he thought the danger to remainder-men and incumbrancers more apparent than real.

Lord COTTENHAM was sure that the noble Earl would, upon consideration, see that there was really no difference between this Bill and the Public Works Bill, so far as the matter in question was concerned; but if the noble Earl declined to act upon the suggestion which he had made, he should certainly take the sense of the House upon it.

The Earl of WICKLOW would be very sorry to see any difficulty thrown in the way of carrying this measure into effect, which he thought would be the case if the Amendment proposed by the noble and learned Lord should be adopted by their Lordships. He thought there was some distinction between the Public Works Bill and the present measure, because it was perfectly impossible that any work done under the Drainage Bill should not be for the benefit of all parties, whether they had a present or future right to the possession of the land. He feared greatly that any introduction of such a clause as that contended for by the noble and learned Lord would tend to defeat the Bill altogether.

Lord CAMPBELL must say, that he felt much indebted to his noble and learned Friend for the attention which he had paid to this clause, because he was fully convinced that unless his noble and learned Friend's suggestion was attended to, this Bill would be of no use to Ireland. He knew that the noble Earl was anxious that these Bills should be framed in the best manner, and that his private reasons for opposing the introduction of the clause were no doubt excellent; but he was rather surprised at the advice which he must have received outside of the House. If it were certain that every operation under this Bill would be successful, it would, no doubt, do good to all parties interested; but the noble Earl could hardly be so sanguine as to suppose that, in every place where money was laid out to a large amount, it would repay the outlay. There would, no doubt, be occasionally some indiscretion in the way in which the operations under the Bill were conducted; and supposing that the Board of Works were ever so active and intelligent, there might, notwithstanding, be most serious injury to the interests of the

remainder-man or mortgagee. Let them look at the situation in which a mortgagee would be placed under such a state of circumstances. A large sum of money might he raised for drainage, and this was placed as a charge on the land prior to the claim of the mortgagee. In England there existed methods by which the interests of absent parties might be protected; and he did not see why the same machinery might not be introduced into Ireland: the object of both Bills was the same, and he thought the machinery ought to he the same.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, there were very important differences between the two Bills, as in one case the consent of a considerable number of proprietors was required; and he was of opinion that an application to the Court of Chancery in all cases would cause a great interference with the efficiency of the Bill; besides, it should be recollected that the charge was not to be on the whole estate, but the part drained, or within a certain distance of the part to be drained.

LORD COTTENHAM did not object to the part of the Bill which referred to the drainage; but what he required was, that the interests of all those concerned in the land should be provided for.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, he would recommend the noble Earl to take into consideration the suggestion of his noble and learned Friend before the third reading.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, he had no objection to a further consideration of the suggestion, and he would therefore not proceed with the Bill on that occasion.

Further consideration of the Bill postponed.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 27, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. — For Gloucester County (Eastern Division), the Marquess of Worcester.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Print works.

Reported.—Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2).

3°. and passed. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By several hon. Members, from various places, against, and by several hon. Members, from a number of places, in favour, of a Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By the Earl of March, Mr. Francis Scott, and Mr. Shaw, from various places, against, and by Mr. John Martin and Lord Francis Egerton, from Tewkesbury, and Haddington, in favour, of the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Lord Francis Egerton, from Silk Weavers of Ormskirk, against reducing the Duty on Foreign Wrought Silk.—By Lord Francis Egerton, from the Liverpool Brazilian Association, for Alteration of Duty on Sugar.—By Mr. Duncan, from the Slater and Hammermen Incorporations of Dundee, and by the Lord Advocate, from Burgesses and other Inhabitants of Lanark, in favour of Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Cumming Bruce, from Commissioners of Supply of the County of Nairn, for defraying Expenses of Criminal Prosecutions (Scotland), out of Consolidated Fund.—By several hon. Members, from various places, in favour of a Ten Hours' (Factory) Bill. — By Mr. Aldam, and Mr. Ferrand, from Leeds, Keighley, and Knaresborough, for Remission of Sentence on Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. John Henry Vivian, from Inhabitants of the Town of Swansea, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Mr. Tatton Egerton, from Guardians of the Poor of the Union of Stockport, for Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Mr. Cumming Bruce, from the Presbytery of Elgin, against Licensing Toll Houses (Scotland) for Sale of Spirituous Liquors.

PRIVILEGE.

MR. JOHN O'CONNELL begged leave to call the attention of the House to a breach of its privileges, which had been committed by a newspaper, in which he, as a Member of that House, had been accused of having given notice of a Motion in the House, of which he was afterwards so ashamed as to have felt himself compelled to withdraw it. Now, he denied that assertion totally. He trusted he had never done anything either in or out of the House, and he certainly trusted he had never said or done anything in the House, of which he had cause to be ashamed. He had not withdrawn the notice of Motion which he had given under any such feeling. The matter had arisen out of the case of Bryan Seery. He had ascertained that a deputation had waited on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the purpose of praying that that unfortunate man should be put to death. He had then given notice of his intention to move for the names of the persons who had formed that deputation. In giving that notice, he had used very strong expressions, but not stronger than, in his opinion, the case deserved. The Speaker had privately called his attention to the fact, and in a friendly manner had informed him that in such a case the expressions would be not merely his (Mr. J. O'Connell's own); but by allowing them to remain on the Votes, the effect would be, that of pledging the House to the use of those very strong terms. He at once yielded; and, in order not to commit any irregularity, he had altered the words of his Motion. But he did not think the case had been met by the right hon. Baronet opposite, in the explanation he had given the other day. The right hon. Baronet had stated, that the case of Seery had been mentioned only incidentally by the deputation that had waited on the Lord Lieutenant. That was no answer to the

charge. ["Order."] He should submit; and as he had given the explanation he desired, he would not found any Motion on the subject.

Sir R. H. INGLIS could not understand why the hon. Gentleman should have made the statement, without making also a Motion founded upon it, unless he had reckoned upon a great extension of the indulgence of the Speaker and the indulgence of the House towards him. If the hon. Gentleman had indeed stated his regret at having used the expressions which had been withdrawn, he should have been one of the last to comment upon the matter; but the hon. Gentleman had limited his expression of regret to the fact, that the term "bloodhound deputation" was not in accordance with the usages of the House. If the hon. Gentleman would only say that he regretted having used the expression at all, he would be satisfied; but he had seen the expression "bloodhound deputation," to his great surprise, printed in the Votes, and he found that it had subsequently been expunged, and the notice cancelled. He trusted that for the sake of society, at least, the hon. Gentleman would express his regret for having used such language as frankly as he had expressed his regret for having used it so far as regarded the House itself. Unless the hon. Member did so, he should not be satisfied.

Mr. J. O'CONNELL had already expressed his regret for having used the expression. The hon. Baronet had spoken of the duty which he (Mr. J. O'Connell) owed to society; but it was in the discharge of that very duty which he owed society that he had originally used those strong expressions.

Subject at an end.

VACANCIES IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

Colonel SIBTHORP, seeing the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury in his place, would at once rise to put the question to him of which he had given notice. The right hon. Baronet had not chosen to answer the question last night. Now, he did not complain of the absence of that courtesy which he was always anxious to receive as an independent Member of that House. To himself personally it was quite indifferent; but to the large and respectable constituency which had done him the honour of sending him there as their Representative, he felt that he was entitled to receive an answer to any question he felt it his duty to put. He owed it to that constituency to put the question of which he had given notice. It had been last Session his painful duty—yes, he confessed it—his painful duty to withhold his support from the right hon. Baronet, and to state that he no longer had any confidence in the right hon. Baronet; but still he was entitled to receive an answer to any question he might find it necessary to put to the right hon. Baronet. So, last night, having seen the Treasury bench in a situation in which he had never seen it before, and in which he hoped he should never see it again, he had felt it desirable to inquire when the vacant offices would be filled up? As the House knew, many of the most important offices were not filled. The Secretary for the Colonies—a Gentleman for whose talent and attainments he had the highest respect, was not in the House. Then there was the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland—a noble Lord whose private character he estimated most highly—but who certainly ought to be in that House to answer any questions which at the present moment might be put to him respecting the condition of the country. He had no seat in the House. Then there were the two learned Gentlemen, the Attorney and Solicitor General for Ireland—no unimportant officers—to whom Members of that House might wish to put questions. Seeing that those hon. Gentlemen were not filling any situation in Parliament, he had determined to put the question. He had last night asked the right hon. Baronet whether they would have an early opportunity of seeing any, or all, of those hon. Gentlemen in seats in that House? The right hon. Baronet, for reasons best known to himself, had been silent, and he therefore was now compelled to repeat the question. His duty to the House, to the country, to his own constituency, compelled him to do so. The question he wished to put was, whether there was any probability of an opportunity being afforded to the Members of that House, by the early appearance of these honourable Gentlemen, of putting any questions to them respecting the state of public affairs? If the right hon. Baronet was not disposed to answer the question, he should draw his own inference; and no doubt the House would do the same.

Sir R. PEEL: I hope that neither the gallant Officer nor any other Member has any just ground of accusing me of want of courtesy when they put questions connected with the public service. I cannot charge

myself, even in the heat of political contention, with any want of courtesy; but I do assure the hon. and gallant Member that he concluded his speech last night without putting his question. He made rather a long speech on a particular Motion, namely, that the debate be adjourned, though the hon. Member for Northamptonshire had objected to advantage being taken of that Motion for the purpose of making a speech. The hon. and gallant Member did, however, make a speech, seasoned with that quantity of vituperation which is not unusual, and perhaps is to him natural. Some persons may have thought, even, that the cleanliness of the language of the hon. and gallant Officer was in danger on the occasion. Having already spoken in the debate, I did not think it right to take advantage of the Motion in order to trouble the House again, knowing that other opportunities would soon present themselves, when, if he thought proper, the hon. and gallant Member might put his question. He imputed to me a want of courtesy arising out of some attack he made last Session. I can assure him that I had not only completely pardoned that attack, but that I had utterly forgotten it. The gallant Member gave notice that he would put a question which was perfectly regular and legitimate, namely, whether certain offices are at present filled? I came down prepared to answer that question, and to state what offices under the Crown were vacant. I was prepared to inform him that the only office actually vacant is that of First Commissioner of the Woods and Forests, and to add, that only a very few days would elapse before it was filled. Two hon. Friends of mine, Members of the Board of Treasury, have signified to me that a sense of duty will compel them to vote against the Government, and they have tendered their resignations. Those resignations will be accepted; but the offices are not yet vacant, and will not be vacant until new patents are made out. In the mean time, my hon. Friends are perfectly ready and able to execute their Ministerial duties. They have resigned; but they have consented to discharge their functions until they are relieved by their successors. Therefore the public service, for which the hon. and gallant Officer is naturally so anxious, has sustained no inconvenience or detriment from delay. That was the question I thought the hon. Member meant to put, and of which he gave notice; but now he asks a question that at any rate is unusual, if not unconstitutional—namely, when certain Gentlemen, holding office under the Crown, will be returned to the House of Commons? The hon. and gallant Officer complained last night that my noble Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was not here; why he is not here is a matter for which the gallant Member is much more responsible than I am. He did what he could to oppose my noble Friend's return. It may be some satisfaction to the gallant Officer to know that, if his tenants were not influenced, they followed his example, and voted against my noble Friend. If he had taken another course, and as strenuously supported my noble Friend, as he vigorously opposed him, the objection he has taken would never have arisen. I do not know any rule by which Members holding these offices should necessarily be Members of the House. I do not deny that there is inconvenience in officers holding high situations not being Members; but the present case hardly seems to afford the hon. and gallant Gentleman an opportunity of questioning the prerogative of the Crown in making these appointments. He has said that the office of Secretary for the Colonies is vacant. That is not the fact. [Colonel SIBTHORP: No, no.] He said, as I understood him, that the office of Secretary for the Colonies is vacant. I am not aware that such is the case; on the contrary, a right hon. Friend of mine is in the daily discharge of its duties. True, my right hon. Friend is not a Member of the House, and it is impossible for me to say when he may be. I must also say that, when a noble and gallant Friend of mine relinquished his prospects of military promotion, and became Clerk of the Ordnance, I believed that he concurred in the general policy of the Government. He is not a Member of this House, and when he appealed to me, I did say to him, "I will not advise the Crown to deprive you of your situation." It is true that three or four persons holding office under the Crown, and usually in Parliament, are not now Members of the House of Commons; but this I will say, that one of the main reasons why they are not is this—that I have such confidence in the policy and wisdom of the measures which the Government have submitted to Parliament, and such confidence in the calm deliberation and ultimate just decision of the House of Commons, that I am content to forego that advantage which, in ordinary times, the Crown possesses.

MR. FERRAND AND HIS ACCUSERS.

MR. FERRAND: Sir, I am about to claim for a very few minutes the attention of the House while I defend myself against a personal attack which was made on me last night by no less than four Members who sit on the other side of the House. As I said at the conclusion of the debate last night, if I had received the slightest intimation of the course those hon. Members were going to take, I should have been here in my place to meet any attack. I should also have been here at the reading of the first Order of the Day yesterday, but for a particular engagement elsewhere. Sir, in the first place, I have to thank an hon. and gallant Member who sits on the opposite benches for the very handsome manner in which he stood forward to defend me, against what I have no hesitation in calling a most unmanly attack; and I have also to tender my thanks to the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis), and another hon. Friend of mine (Mr. Colquhoun), who sit immediately below me, for the part they took in my behalf in my absence. Sir, when I addressed the House the other night, I made no statement that I did not solemnly believe to be true; and I feel thoroughly convinced that I shall be now able to justify every expression I then used, and for which I have been attacked by those four hon. Members to whom I refer. Sir, the attack was commenced by the hon. and learned Member for Bath. I think his remarks were so personal that they carried along with them their own antidote; and, therefore, it is scarcely necessary for me to allude to it any further than to say that I think the hon. and learned Member for Bath was the last person in this House who ought to have made use of the following expression, which I believe I shall quote correctly:—

"I am quite sure that if this House is in any way whatever to maintain its dignity or command respect, it is not by vulgar vituperation, indecent menace, or violent langnage."

Sir, if I am not very much mistaken, I remember the case of an hon. and learned Member of this House standing on this floor, and with language far more violent than any I have used, and far more indecent, throwing down *The Times* newspaper, and recommending hon. Members on both sides of the House to horsewhip a gentleman who is in every respect the superior of the hon. and learned Gentleman. The hon. and learned Gentleman then went on to say—

"But, I would ask, what is the worth of that hon. Member's opinion? I will measure it by the ordinary test which is applied in my own profession. Would any one give, I do not say a guinea, or even half a guinea, but even half a crown, or half a farthing, for any opinion he could express upon gentlemen's conduct?"

Sir, I believe that the public have that opinion of the hon. and learned Member, that they would not give one quarter of a farthing for his opinion; and in short, that this is one of the sore points which continually rankles in the hon. and learned Member's breast. Sir, I shall not condescend any further to allude to the attack made upon me by the hon. and learned Member for Bath, but shall at once proceed to notice the attack made on me by the hon. Member for Durham. Sir, that hon. Member said—

"I will take the liberty to say that almost every portion of that which the hon. Member for Knaresborough stated as fact with respect to that gentleman was utterly untrue. Mr. Wilson never called a meeting of the starch manufacturers, having reference to the question of protective duties; he never presided at such meeting; he formed no part of a deputation who came up to Government on the subject."

But, Sir, the hon. Member for Durham has put words into my mouth which I never used. I never said Mr. Wilson formed one of a deputation which waited upon the Government on the subject of starch. What I said was this—

"The Chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law League convened a meeting at Manchester of all the starch-dealers in the kingdom, at which he presided, and a resolution was adopted to the effect, that a deputation should go from the meeting to the right hon. Baronet, and use their influence with him in favour of starch. The deputation waited on the right hon. Baronet, and were successful; and I believe that lobsters and starch were the only things which obtained the slightest mercy in the Tariff."

The House will perceive from this that I never said in that speech that Mr. George Wilson was a member of the deputation which waited on the Government on that subject. I shall, however, proceed to justify the statement which I made to the House. Sir, on the 7th of February, 1843, I received this letter from a gentleman, Mr. S. Burlington, of Manchester, addressed to B. Ferrand, Esq., M.P.:—

"I take the liberty of troubling you with a few particulars, which, I think, will show to you the sort of disinterested reformers some of the leading members of the Anti-Corn-Law League are. You will please to satisfy yourself of the correctness of this statement before you make any public use of it. When Sir R. Peel published his new Tariff, he put down starch at 5*l.* per cwt. duty from any foreign country; it before was 9*l.* something. No

sooner did Mr. G. Wilson, chairman of the council of the League, and a few other leading men, hear of it, than they summoned a meeting of all the starch-makers in the kingdom to meet at Manchester; and Mr. G. Wilson took the chair. Now, what do you think this meeting was for? You would suppose to take off the whole duty, as the whole population are consumers of the article? No such thing. Mr. G. Wilson, Mr. John Rawsthorne, Mr. Halliday, and others, were starch manufacturers; and, although there are only about 300 of them, masters and men, yet the whole population of Great Britain and Ireland must be taxed for their individual interests, and not taxed at 5*l.* per cwt. (25 per cent upon the cost of foreign starch); but they wanted the tax to be prohibitory, and actually succeeded in doubling the duty. They appointed a deputation from the meeting, consisting of Mr. J. Rawsthorne, Mr. Halliday, and others, to wait upon the Board of Trade. These are self-styled disinterested reformers. You must not suppose that I am not for free trade: on the contrary; but I cannot join such free traders as these; and think every man of principle should show them up to public indignation."

With respect to this letter, I will only add that I did satisfy myself of its correctness before I used it; and the first public use I made of it was on Tuesday evening last. Sir, in the month of December I was in the town of Manchester; I saw several gentlemen there, whom I asked as to whether the statements made in that letter were correct: they informed me that they were entirely correct, and they also added that they believed that Mr. Wilson was a member of the deputation that went up to the Government. On the following day after this statement was made to me, I attended a large meeting at the borough of Stockport. I made use of this communication, adding to it that Mr. Wilson had been a member of the deputation. The *Manchester Guardian*, which is the paper of the League in that town, attacked me in a leading article for that statement: they denied that Mr. Wilson had formed any part of that deputation, though they admitted that the deputation had waited on the Government. That paper, however, did not in the slightest degree deny that Mr. Wilson convened that meeting at Manchester, nor that he presided, nor that the resolution for the appointment of the deputation was agreed to at that meeting. Sir, I have seen three gentlemen to-day who are acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and they having seen my statement declare that it is entirely correct. To that statement I am prepared to adhere. I shall not retract one particle of it; and, until the hon. Member for Durham shall convince the House and the country that Mr. George Wilson did not preside at that meeting, that he did not help to convene it, and that the resolution I have referred to was not put to that meeting while he was in the chair, I shall still maintain my original statement. I must, however, say, Sir, that the hon. Member for Durham is the last man who should stand up and attack another hon. Member for making unfounded statements. Is the hon. Member aware of the public meetings which have taken place in the county of Lancaster, to rebut statements he has made in this House, and also to assert before the world that they were utterly without foundation?—ay, and that one of those meetings took place in Rochdale, the town in which the hon. Member resides when he is at home? As the hon. Member has made this attack on me, I shall defend myself, I shall justify myself, and leave it to the House to decide how they can place confidence in his statements after they shall have heard what I am going to read. This is an extract from the *Bolton Chronicle*, the town represented by the hon. and learned Member opposite (Dr. Bowring) who was also one of those who attacked me in my absence. The hon. Member was proceeding to read the extract from the newspaper, which began by referring to the debate on Lord Ashley's Bill, when he was interrupted by

THE SPEAKER, who, said, that it was contrary to the rules of the House for an hon. Member to read from any paper which referred to a debate in that House.

MR. FERRAND: Very well, Sir, I will do my utmost to leave out what refers to the House of Commons. Of course. I am under your orders, and I shall instantly obey if you intimate that I am doing wrong. The hon. Member then proceeded to read the following passage from the newspaper in question, leaving out the allusion to the House of Commons:—

"The statements made by Mr. J. Bright on the night Lord Ashley introduced his Bill into Parliament, have created such a sensation in the manufacturing districts, that some difficulty is experienced in allaying the ferment—Preston and Rochdale being particularly involved in the slanders put forth by the hon. Member. The people of those towns immediately proceeded to hold meetings, with a view of rebutting Mr. Bright's calumnies. The people of Preston did ample justice to their character, and proved that there was not one word of truth in the allegations made in the House of Commons. Rochdale has also raised its voice; and on Monday night, one of the most crowded meetings of factory operatives ever held in the town, took place in the People's Institution. The object of the meeting was chiefly to disprove the statements made by Mr. Bright, that gentleman having stated that the people of Roch-

dale were not favourable to the Ten Hours' Bill; and that the meetings in favour of it were composed of, and conducted by, handloom weavers, who wanted to retard the progress of machinery for the benefit of their own trade. The meeting was called for eight o'clock; but long before that time every corner in the spacious hall (the largest room in the town) was crowded to suffocation, and hundreds were compelled to go away who could not obtain admission. Mr. John Whitaker, the high constable of the borough, presided; and it is a remarkable and gratifying fact, that the whole of the proceedings were conducted by factory workers. There were present a large number of factory girls, who appeared to take a warm interest in the proceedings."

The proceedings concluded with the following resolution:—

"'That the present system of long hours in factories is very injurious to all the persons employed in them, as twelve hours' labour per day is more than the human constitution can endure without injury; and that the practice of working long hours, deprives us of every advantage in literature and science, and reduces us from the condition of social beings to that of mere serfs, without any of the enjoyments of social life. And this meeting is further of opinion, that the adoption of the Ten Hours' Bill would be a very great improvement on this system of over-working, as it would afford us an opportunity of improving our physical, mental, and moral condition; and we pledge ourselves never to relax our exertions until this measure becomes law.' Mr. Stephen Clark, a cotton-spinner, seconded the Motion. He said he belonged to the Short Time Committee; and they considered they would not be doing their duty unless they gave the factory workers of Rochdale an opportunity of contradicting the ——"

Sir, I must break off here; I am afraid to use the word with which the statements of the hon. Member for Durham are characterized, The newspaper goes on to say—

"Immediately on the statement made by that gentleman coming to the knowledge of the operatives, no less than eighteen or twenty mills met and agreed to hold a public meeting to denounce the statements as false and slanderous; and the crowded state of the meeting which he was then addressing, was a strong indication of the sentiments of the operatives, and a convincing proof of the utter falseness of the statement made by Mr. Bright. That gentleman had been invited to attend the meeting and defend his statements, but he had not made his appearance."

Now, Sir, that is the result of a meeting of the operatives of the town of Rochdale, the town in which the hon. Member resides when he is at home. I must say, I think it would be well if the hon. Member were to be more careful in future before he makes attacks on me or any other Member of this House. Sir, I now come to the hon. Member for Bolton, who also made an attack on me last night, in which he misrepresented what I said on Tuesday night, although he was present and heard my speech. The hon. Member quoted me as having said these words:—

"The hon. Member talked of the poverty of the people in Mr. Ashworth's employment, of their nakedness, of the wretchedness of their dwellings."

Now, I ask him whether he means to say that I used those words? [Dr. BOWRING *made a gesture of assent.*] I suppose the hon. Member means that I did. Then I mean to say that I never used such words. But the hon. Member, standing up in my absence, puts words into my mouth which are calculated to harm me in this House and with the country, and words which I never used. The hon. Member was present and heard what I did say. Sir, I ask is this fair? Is it manly? Is it honourable? I am prepared to fight my own battle on fair and open grounds; and I never made a charge in this House which I do not solemnly believe, and which I am not prepared to stand by. Now, I ask the House to listen to the words I did use. They were these:—

"At the very time he (Ashworth) complained that the handloom weavers' wages had risen 10 per cent, a Committee was inquiring into their condition, and hearing evidence, which proved that the men surrounding this man's mill were living on 2¾*d.* a day. Nay, more than this, it was proved that the handloom weavers were in such a state that many of them had not worn a shirt for five years, that they were clothed in rags, that they had no furniture, no plates to eat from, no chairs or tables, only a chest that served them for table and drawers, which was all the furniture in their houses. That was the state of the handloom weavers when this letter was written."

When I had concluded those observations, there was a cry of "hear, hear," which showed that hon. Members quite understood what I said. When Mr. Ashworth made that complaint that the wages of the handloom weavers had risen 10 per cent, it was in that letter of his to the Poor Law Commissioners, in which he asked them to send down labourers from the agricultural districts to his mill; and the Committee I referred to was that of which the hon. Member for Oldham was a member. I call on that hon. Member to lay aside all feelings of private friendship towards me, and to stand up as an independent Member of this House, and deny what I state if he can. Now, Sir, what is the authority on which I made the statement to which the hon. Member for Bolton objects? It is the evidence of Mr. John Makin, a manufacturer of Bolton, given on the 17th of July, 1834, before that Committee, Mr.

Ashworth's letter having been written on the 9th of June, only nine weeks previously. Mr. Makin, who was called by the hon. Member for Oldham, was asked—

"Can you tell the Committee what description of food the weavers are generally obliged to put up with?—The description of food is chiefly oatmeal porridge and potatoes, with occasionally a small quantity of butchers' meat, which they may obtain once in the course of a week. Are there any of them that are not able to procure a sufficient quantity of that coarse food with the wages they now earn?—I have made a calculation, by which I estimate that, if a man has to support himself and wife, and five children, with the assistance of two children and his wife labouring with him, they will not be able to earn, for food and clothing, more than 2¾*d.* per day. I was not aware of the state of things, although I was familiarly acquainted with the trade, until I sat down and made a calculation for myself, and I must confess I was startled with the fact.—Then the distress of the weavers far exceeded what you had any conception of till you made the inquiry from your own books, and from pursuing the inquiry to other sources, that enabled you to come to those conclusions?—It did. If they are so distressed for food, how are they off for clothing?—I cannot recollect an instance but one, where any weaver of mine has bought a new jacket for many years. Then, they are literally clothed in rags?—Yes. I am only sorry I did not bring one or two jackets to let the Committee see the average state in which they are clothed. Is their bedding and their furniture of the same inadequate description with their food and their clothing?—I have not been in many of the weavers' bedrooms, but I have been in some, and they appear to be very bare of clothing. I have known some who have not had a blanket at all, merely a coarse coverlid, of the value perhaps of half-a-crown when new. What is the nature of their furniture?—I have observed both on Bolton-moor and at Torkholes, where I go to manufacture, that they are generally without chairs; I have seen many houses with only two or three three-legged stools, and some I have seen without a stool or chair, with only a tea-chest to put their clothes in, and to sit upon."

Sir, that is my authority for the statement I made as to the distress of the handloom weavers; and I call on the hon. Member for Bolton, in the presence of the hon. Member for Oldham, to refute one atom of that evidence if he can; and if he cannot, then I call on him, as a Member of this House, and as a gentleman, to retract the charge which he made yesterday. Sir, I see the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire in his place. He also referred to me yesterday. From what I know of the noble Lord, I am sure he would shrink with horror from making any statement that would be injurious to the character of any individual. I do assure the noble lord that at the time I presented those petitions, I was justified in making the statement I did. The noble Lord said—

"As this discussion had been raised, he would read a letter which he had received on the subject of one statement of the hon. Member for Knaresborough. It was from the operatives of Union-mill, whose attention had been attracted by a statement of the hon. Member, to the effect that many of the operatives had been compelled by their masters to sign petitions against the Corn Laws."

Now, what I said was, that manufacturers in the West Riding who were members of the Anti-Corn-Law League compelled their workmen to sign petitions for the repeal of the Corn Laws. I am prepared to prove that statement before a Committee of this House; and Sir, I do think it is high time that the House take up the subject, and inquire into the manner in which petitions to this House have been forged and manufactured, and this not only under the sanction of the League, but paid for with the money of the League. This I am prepared to prove before a Committee of this House, and to produce a man who was paid so much a day, and who wrote down signatures by thousands. No less than 14,000 names were written by one man. I am ready to prove it before a Committee. Sir, I will read a letter which I received yesterday morning. [The first part of this letter related entirely to the Ten Hours' Bill. The latter part said]:—

"I felt well pleased at your putting the question to Lord Morpeth with regard as to how the signatures had been obtained for a total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. You may depend upon it the same means have been resorted to here as you spoke of."

For obvious reasons I do not state the name, but it is here. The letter is dated from Holbeck, and I am ready to place it in the noble Lord's hands, because I know he will not make an unfair use of it, or allow it to be used to the injury of the writer. Sir, that is my defence, and if any further attack is made on me, I shall be as ready to defend myself again.

Mr. CRAVEN BERKELEY said: I rise, Sir, to corroborate the statement of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, in his statement as to the manufacturing of petitions. Now, Sir, I hold in my hand a petition which was presented at my residence by the postman on Wednesday last. It purports to be from Cheltenham, and there are 594 signatures. But my attention was attracted by seeing the post-mark "Manchester," instead of Cheltenham. I immediately sent the petition to the town of Cheltenham, and wrote to my Agent

there desiring him to ascertain whether the signatures were genuine, and whether such a petition had been got up there? I also wrote to five genrlemen whose names appeared first among the signatures on the first sheet of the petition, requesting to know whether they had signed the petition, and whether it had been got up in that neighbourhood. The first name attached to the petition is "Stephen Reid;" and the following is the answer I received from him :—

"Cheltenham, Feb. 20, 1846.

"Sir—I knew nothing of the petition referred to in your letter of yesterday's date. I have signed no petition, and certainly have not authorized any body to sign it for me; and as I know no other person in Cheltenham of the name but myself, I doubt the honesty of the petition, and would with great respect caution you in acting upon it. I suspect but one person who would use my name, and he may possibly may have done so for his own purposes."

The next letter is from my Agent, to whom I sent the petition :—

"Cheltenham, Feb. 26, 1846.

"I have perused the petition from Manchester. It contains some signatures which were genuine; but I venture say they never were put to the present petition. I have seen Mr. Perry, the miller, at Alston-mill, whose name appears in the first sheet of the petition. He says he never heard of it before, though he would certainly have signed a petition for the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. Most of the names seem to me forgeries, or at all events not written by the parties represented. I don't think the petition ought to be presented as that of the inhabitants of Cheltenham. I never heard of it before, nor have I met with any householder that ever did."

During the fourteen years I have held a seat in this House, I have always voted for the Motions made in favour of free trade. I supported the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) in 1841, when he brought forward his proposition for a fixed duty. I have always supported the hon. Members for Wolverhampton and Stockport when they have brought forward Motions either for free trade, or for inquiry into the burdens which affect land. But I scorn to support any Motion or any system by such means as the present. I say unless the question of free trade can stand on its own merits, it will only be hindered by such impositions as this; and now I beg to give notice that on Monday next I shall bring forward the case I have now mentioned as a breach of the privileges of this House. I claim the support of those hon. Members who are members of the Anti-Corn-Law League in my attempt to trace out the author of the forgery; for, if I don't get their assistance the obloquy which attaches to the author of the petition will also extend to them. [Hon. Members: What is the prayer of the petition?] The petitioners, after stating some arguments, "most earnestly implore the House, at once and for ever, entirely to abolish all, duties tending to diminish the supply of the people's food."

Mr. BRIGHT: The hon. Member for Cheltenham has done what he could to corroborate the statement of the hon. Member for Knaresborough. I believe that no one Member can be more willing than another that a case like that should receive the fullest possible investigation. I recommend him to move for a Committee to inquire, and I shall be most glad to second the Motion, and to join him or any other Member upon the Committee in sifting the case most thoroughly. The hon. Member for Knaresborough has endeavoured to answer the attack which he says I made upon him; but he has merely recited what he said a few nights before, giving us, in addition, a letter he has had in his pocket for some two years, as a proof that his assertions were correct. Now, I am prepared still to say, that I believe every part of his statement is utterly unfounded. I have here a letter from Mr. Rawsthorne, whose name has been mentioned, and who formed one of the deputation to the Board of Trade respecting the duty on starch. He states distinctly, that Mr. George Wilson did not issue the circular requesting the starch manufacturers to assemble in Manchester—that Mr. George Wilson did not act as chairman of the meeting. That is the reply to two of the statements the hon. Member has made. He denies that any meeting of the kind took place, and consequently that no deputation proceeded from such meeting, either of individual members of the council of the League, or of any other gentlemen. It is true, he adds, that two other gentlemen and himself waited upon the Minister, but that Mr. Wilson was not one of them—that they proceeded to London, their object being not to seek protection; and this was clearly stated at the interview with the Board of Trade. If they were permitted to use the raw material, wheat, free of duty, that was all they desired, and not any protective duty whatever on the manufactured article, starch; they only asked a duty equivalent to that which was proposed to be levied on the raw material. The following is an extract from the memo-

rial presented at the time. [The hon. Member read a quotation from the memorial, stating that with a free trade in wheat the starch manufacturers were not afraid of foreign competition; but that while the price of the raw material was kept up by the operation of the Corn Laws, the proposed small duty of *5s.* per cwt. on foreign-made starch threatened their trade, and all hopes of competition with the foreign manufacturer.] Judging from the speeches of some hon. Members, it is possible that this explanation will not be understood. The hon. Gentleman, for instance, may not perceive that a duty on the foreign article, to counterbalence the duty on the raw material from which that article is made in this country, is different from a protective duty. The statement of the hon. Member for Knaresborough has been thus met and refuted. I have proved that Mr. Wilson never convened the meeting. I say, therefore, that to assert that he did, is positively and utterly unfounded: that he presided at such a meeting is not more true. The hon. Member has made other extraordinary statements as to Mr. Wilson; but it will be recollected that, as to some of his assertions, an offer has been made to meet him in a court of justice. [Mr. FERRAND: No.] Does the hon. Member recollect that he once charged Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rawsthorne with being present at a meeting in Liverpool, during which a proposition had been made to commit the frightful crime of assassination? Does he recollect that Mr. Rawsthorne's solicitor wrote to the solicitor of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, to ask him if he was prepared to stand by his statement; and that the reply was that the hon. Member was willing to stand by the report in the *Morning Post?* The solicitor of Mr. Rawsthorne next wrote to Mr. Coulson, of Bradford, the solicitor of the hon. Member, to request, in order to be saved the inconvenience of proceeding against a newspaper, that the hon. Member would give an admission of the accuracy of the report in the *Morning Post,* and give the newspaper a guarantee. The hon. Member agreed to do so: he intimated that he would give the guarantee, in order that the proprietor of the *Morning Post* might be saved harmless from the costs. Had the hon. Member ever given that guarantee? Every particle of the statement of the hon. Member was as untrue as anything that had ever been uttered by human being on this earth. It could be proved to be untrue in all its parts; but the hon. Gentleman did not dare to go into a court of justice. An hon. Member suggests that I ought to state why the prosecution was not followed up. We of the League appealed for the success of our cause to public opinion; and it would ill become us to prosecute an editor engaged in the honourable and meritorious undertaking of giving good speeches as well as bad to the public. The hon. Gentleman read a letter from Rochdale, and an extract from a Tory newspaper, published in the town of Bolton. Well, I am prepared to stand before the people of Rochdale on whatever small merits I possess. I don't want the hon. Member to stand sponsor for their opinion of me. They know me intimately, and I know them; and I am quite sure that Rochdale is the last place in the country where the hon. Gentleman would be received in a manner on which he could congratulate himself. He must have a recollection of the reception he met with in the theatre of the town. I shall now say no more than that his statements as to Mr. Wilson are utterly unfounded, and, if I may use the words of a resolution on the books of this House, that they are "calumnious, and altogether unfounded."

DR. BOWRING: I think I am called on to say a few words, and they shall be very few. The hon. Gentleman complains that he was not answered immediately after he sat down—that I was present, and did not rise to reply to him. Now the hon. Gentleman detailed accurately the sufferings of a portion of the labouring community in Bolton and its neighbourhood. He spoke of the miserable way in which the people were fed, clad, and housed, and of the wretched wages which they were enabled to get. He introduced the name of Mr. Henry Ashworth, and mentioned him as an individual who was mainly instrumental in removing large numbers of the agricultural population to Bolton and its neighbourhood, and thereby directly causing the distress of which he made such complaint. He appealed to the House against what he called the "cold-blooded cruelty of this Quaker." And what is his statement now? Why, that he never referred to Mr. Henry Ashworth at all. [Mr. FERRAND: No.] The hon. Gentleman says to-night that the scenes which he described took place in Mr. Ashworth's neighbourhood, in some mills away from his abode, and he completely disconnected Mr. Ashworth's name from the cruelty

with which he endeavoured the other night to associate it. I took the liberty of writing to the noble Lord the Member for Newark on this subject; and certainly his testimony must be of a disinterested character, because he has given us to understand that he does not mean to support the measures of the Government. Now I only ask him to say whether Mr. H. Ashworth deserves, from the hands of the hon. Gentleman, or any one else, to be charged with "cold-blooded cruelty?" The noble Lord visited his establishment, and made himself acquainted with its details and with the condition of the people in attendance there; and I am quite willing to leave the whole case in the hands of the noble Lord, whose love of truth will enable the House to judge between the statement of the hon. Member and mine.

Mr. ROEBUCK: I think I was perfectly justified, by all the rules of courtesy observed in this House, in presuming that the hon. Member, who occupied two hours and a half of the last hours of the debate of one night in a very fierce attack on Members on this side of the House—["No, no;"]—yes, and on persons out of this House, who could only be defended by those who sit here—would, as a mere matter of fairness, be in his place to hear the answer which could be made to his vituperation. If he was not here, the fault was the hon. Member's. An opportunity was afforded me by the forms of the House of complaining of the way in which the time of the House had been wasted. I availed myself of it, as it was my right to do, and I complained of the language of the hon. Gentleman. And now, Sir, I shall not attempt to answer the sort of attempted sarcasm in which the hon. Gentleman has indulged with respect to me. It is an attack on me for what he is pleased to call my failure in life. If I have failed, Heaven forbid I should attempt to deprive the hon. Member of so noble a topic of congratulation! But I will say, that in all my misfortunes never has it been my fate to have a body of Gentlemen assembled in England declare that which I stated to be a falsehood and a calumny. The resolution passed by this House has descended to posterity on its records, branding a Member of it with being guilty of unfounded calumny with respect to two Members of this House. The hon. Member says he founded his belief of a calumnious statement, which he uttered in this House, on a resolution passed by certain persons in the town of Rochdale. I must also express my belief in the Resolution of the House of Commons, designating the hon. Gentleman as the disseminator of a calumny utterly unfounded. He has never answered that resolution; and so long as it remains the unanimous declaration of the House of Commons, he is welcome, so far as I am concerned, to any assertion he may please to make. It will be weighed in that balance which the House applied to his former statements, and will be cast aside for that worthlessness by which, at present, all his asseverations are characterized. That, Sir, is my answer to the "hon." Gentleman. One word, and one word only, in reply to the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis). He says, that I have offended not only by words, but by my gestures. As to the latter charge, some of us have, unfortunately, peculiarities of that kind which we cannot get over. But the hon. Gentlemen says I pointed out five or six individuals, and named them, and accused them of being guilty of corrupt practices at elections. Sir, I did so. And the hon. Baronet calls that personality! If that is so, an indictment is personal. I charged certain Members with corrupt practices, and I proved my charge. [Major Beresford: No.] An united Committee, without a single division, placed amongst those Members guilty of "corrupt practices" the hon. Member who now cries "No." That is my answer to the hon. Baronet. And when he says, with respect to me, "who would listen to the Gracchi complaining of sedition?" I feel honoured by his comparing me to two of the greatest names which Rome produced.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, I am one of those who very much regret that my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough should think it his duty on several occasions to make attacks on gentlemen whom I call members of the manufacturing body. I entirely differ with him in his general views on that subject. I have often, indeed, remonstrated with him upon the subject. But this I can say, that my hon. Friend says the same things out of the House as he says in it. He is honest. He is sincere. It is his conviction. He believes he is fulfilling his duty; and I cannot see that in the way he has executed it upon the present occasion, he has done anything to call forth the expression of disapprobation, on the part of the House. Now, Sir, with regard to the several individuals whose names have been brought into the discussion: take, for instance, Mr. George Wilson, chairman of

the League. I know nothing personally of him. I believe (that is, I dare say) he is a "very good sort of person"—and when you know a man, you generally find him to be a "very good sort of person." But he has for a series of years been an agitator. He has filled a very distinguished post in public demonstrations of the League, and has been in the habit of expressing himself on public matters and public men with very little reserve. And I must say, that I was astonished that such an individual, or his representatives and apologists here, should on every occasion show the very thin skin which Gentlemen opposite generally evince. So again I must say to Mr. Ashworth, I am convinced that my hon. Friend feels assured that he was authorized in making the statement he has made. What that statement was, I do not exactly know—any more than I understood what was the statement as to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State (Sir J. Graham) as to which the memorable resolution of this House was come to, which has to-night been by the Member for Bath, so theatrically appealed to. I believe, in fact, that the statement and the resolution were equally worthless. But I am bound to say, I don't desire to listen to all these stories myself. I am as prejudiced one way on the subject, as my hon. Friend is the other. I believe the Messrs. Ashworth have done great good. That is my opinion. I have formed that opinion on what I have heard and seen. And my hon. Friend has formed his upon what he has heard and seen. But what I want to impress upon the House is, that it is not desirable, perhaps, that every man in the House should have the same opinion. All men have prejudices, in which they differ from each other; and some men have the frankness freely to confess them. But, speaking seriously, I think that really my hon. Friend has to-night had much the best of it. I deprecate the introduction of these personal topics; but I think that he has entirely substantiated the position he took up, although I regret that he took it up at all. Now, Sir, the hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Bright) has made a confused and clumsy sort of statement as to some supposed accusation by my hon. Friend about Members of the League being abettors of assassination. Whether my hon. Friend did make such a charge or not —whether he was correctly reported— whether the parties accused should have prosecuted or not — all these circumstances are left in darkness and doubt. Nor do I think the House cares much about the matter. But I do recollect hearing Members of the League accused of abetting assassination in this House—by a very distinguished individual at the head of the Administration. Why not prosecute the right hon. Baronet? Here is an "antler'd monarch of the woods:" why hunt "small deer?" If you wish, you Gentlemen of the League, to vindicate your character as to assassination, for which I certainly never gave you credit —you have ample opportunity. Extract from the pages of *Hansard* the statements you may there find; ask the right hon. Baronet if he admits them; and I doubt not he will directly give you a "guarantee," and you may prosecute at once. Now, I must say I think there has been a great deal too much made by the Member for Bath of the resolution of this House a year or two ago, as to a certain statement of my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough. I really think a more ridiculous resolution never was passed; and the more so, as I fully believe the right hon. Baronet, who was forced into the painful position of bringing it forward, and who has a natural taste for humour, was keenly sensible of it, for he did all he could to avert the ridiculous catastrophe; and neither he nor his right hon. Colleague (Sir J. Graham) denied the "vindication" in any way. They did not originate the proceedings. No, Sir; it originated in a quarter whence the most disagreeable proceedings naturally emanate—with the Member for Bath; and when the Member for Bath dilates, with all the dramatic effect worthy of a minor theatre, upon this famous "resolution," which he says denounced a Member for calumnious statements, he should remember his Friend the Member for Cork, who was once placed in a similar disagreeable position — when reprimanded by the Speaker for calumnious statements as to the conduct of Election Committees of the House. I leave both Gentlemen to deal with the respective "resolutions" as they like. I only set the one resolution against the other. Sir, I have not had any resolution passed yet against me; and I think if my hon. Friend had taken my advice never to abuse anybody, but rather to resort to such language as our English tongue and the forms of this House permit for the expression of opinion, he would never have been in the position in which the "resolution" referred to, I think, un-

justly placed him. But, Sir, the Member for Bath, to whom (as usual) we are indebted for these discussions, as well as to that extraordinary "resolution" which hangs around my hon. Friend so awfully—the Member for Bath says, "I have been unjustly accused by the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford (Sir R. Inglis), who says I have pointed my finger at Members and accused them: this is not personality. It is the discharge of public duty, and I was justified in so acting," &c. It is all "very fine," Sir, for the hon. Member thus to "ride off on the high horse;" but it is not the fact. The fact is, on the contrary, that the hon. Member is perpetually, constantly, habitually infringing upon the rules of the House, and, what is more, the proprieties of gentlemanlike demeanour. I know in my own case, and in the case of several hon. Gentlemen on this side, when we have on various occasions uttered our opinions on public affairs, he has got up, and (in direct violation of the rules of the House that you ought never to impute motives to Members) has imputed to us motives most corrupt, most sinister, and most ungentlemanlike. Some of my hon. Friends have noticed it. I never have. I always felt that in this world you must bear a good deal—excited as it was, occasionally, throughout, by the characteristic and inimitable composure and quiet humour which marked the hon. Gentleman's delivery; and that even in this indulgent, though dignified assembly, where, by our "rules," we endeavour, as far as possible, to carry on public affairs without any unnecessary acerbity, still, we must occasionally submit to some things which the rules of this House do not permit. I could, no doubt, easily have vindicated my character; but that would only have made the hon. Member for Bath speak once or twice more: and really I have never any wish to hear him; for I "take things as I find them." I have had the most corrupt motives imputed to me. But I know how true it is that a tree must produce its fruit—that a crab tree will bring forth crab apples—and that a man of meagre or acid mind, who writes a pamphlet or makes a speech, must make a meagre and acid pamphlet, or a poor and sour speech. Let things, then, take their course. But for the Member for Bath! for him—extraordinary purist as he is!—to come forward and complain—as if he had never conducted himself against the rules of the House!—as if he had never been in the habit of imputing improper motives to Gentlemen! Sir, I am in the recollection of the House when I state that the hon. Gentleman by no means represents himself faithfully or consistently; and I think that he—though now assuming the functions of general instructor—as formerly of general accuser—that he would do well to profit by his own precepts, and eschew his melodramatic malignity and Sadler's Wells sort of sarcasm. Sir, it is very easy to put on this sort of air—wagging the finger—'bating the breath—and "looking daggers, though he use none." This is all "extremely fine;" and if it comes from one who is justified in using such language, and having recourse to such gestures—I might say it was simply ridiculous. Coming, however from the quarter whence it does, it is more than ridiculous, it is offensive.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Though I have been often the subject of debate in this House, I thought it hardly possible that my name could be dragged into this discussion. The hon. Gentleman is not correct as to his facts, and he supplied by his imagination the defects of his memory. I was not accused of calumniating any Member of this House. I spoke of a system as being characterized by frequent instances of perjury. That was determined to be a breach of the privileges of this House. I was censured accordingly by the late Speaker, who read me a lecture, and the moment he had done, I repeated my words. The House has since confirmed my words, for it has changed this tribunal. I was a martyr in working out the cause of truth and justice on the occasion alluded to, and I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for giving me an opportunity of saying so.

Major BERESFORD: The hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Roebuck) says I was one of those against whom corrupt practices were proved. I deny that the hon. and learned Gentleman established a single case of bribery against me; and I certainly consider that I was on that occasion unjustly and acrimoniously attacked.

Mr. B. ESCOTT gave the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ferrand) notice that he should in the debate coming on attempt to vindicate the character of some persons whom the hon. Gentleman attacked, and he gave him this notice that he might be present or not as he chose.

Lord J. MANNERS said: I cannot see how any testimony of mine in favour of the admirable manner in which Mr. Ash-

worth conducts and superintends his mills, can bear upon the points that have been alluded to; I believe that Mr. Ashworth himself would rather that I remained silent on the subject; but, as I have been appealed to by the hon. and learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring), I am perfectly ready to say that, as far as I know, Mr. Ashworth has a deep sense of the responsibility that devolves upon him as one of the great cotton barons, as I may call them, under our present system—a responsibility greater than ever rested on the barons of olden time. I have great pleasure in bearing my testimony to the excellent way in which Mr. Ashworth discharges that responsibility.

Mr. FIELDEN said, many of the speeches of that House would be found objectionable, if subjected to the same scrutiny as that applied to his hon. Friend's (Mr. Ferrand's). If hon. Gentlemen in that House would read more and talk less, it would be much to the advantage of the country. With reference to the statements of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, he could only say there were facts contained in them which could not be denied—facts founded on evidence before that House, which his hon. Friend thought it his duty to state. In the year 1834, both Mr. Ashworth and Mr. Greg wrote to the Poor Law Commissioners, requesting that labourers from the southern districts should be sent to the north, for the avowed and express purpose of equalising the wages of the manufacturing artizans. Those letters caused a strong sensation at the time among the working population; for they understood by the term "equalising" the reduction of their wages to the level of that paid in the agricultural counties. On the recommendation and request contained in these letters the Poor Law Commissioners acted, and established an office in Manchester for facilitating the immigration of labourers from the south of England. It had been proved that no less than 10,000 of those labourers had been sent in consequence into the manufacturing districts; but at length the Commissioners relinquished their scheme, and the office in Manchester over which Mr. Muggeridge presided had been given up. As to the cruelties committed in the factories, if hon. Members referred to the Report of Sir Robert Peel's Committee in 1816—if they looked to the Reports of Mr. Sadler, and of the Factory Commissioners, owing to which the Factory Bill of Lord Althorp had been passed, they would be convinced that in all he had said the hon. Member for Knaresborough had not made any overstatement; and that his assertions on those points could be proved on undeniable evidence.

Sir R. PEEL: Certainly, Sir, in the very harmless discussion which has just taken place, I did not intend to have taken any part; nor would I do so, were it not for some allusions made by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury. That hon. Member thought fit to recall to the recollection of the House something which took place about three years since in the course of a heated debate, when I put an erroneous construction on some expressions used by the hon. Member for Stockport. An explanation was given of the meaning of those expressions by that hon. Member; and my intention at the time, after that explanation, was to have relieved the hon. Member for Stockport in the most distinct manner from the imputation which I had put upon him. If any one who was present at that debate had stated to me that my reparation was not so complete, and the avowal of my error not so unequivocal as it ought to have been, I should at once have repeated it more plainly and distinctly. It was my intention to have made the fullest explanation: that my intention must have been so will indeed appear on reference to my speech. I am sorry certainly that the hon. Member for Shrewsbury has thought fit to revive the subject, or, at least, I should have been so if his reference to it had not given me an opportunity of fully and unequivocally withdrawing an imputation on the hon. Member for Stockport, which was thrown out in the heat of debate under an erroneous impression of his meaning.

Mr. COBDEN felt very happy in having the opportunity of expressing his feelings on the remarks of the right hon. Baronet. At the time the occurrence took place he felt—he might say the country felt too—that the right hon. Baronet had not made that distinct disavowal of the imputations which had been long expected. Still the matter itself had been also so extraordinary that there might have been much room for mistake, though it would hardly have borne the interpretation which had been put upon it. He took the present ample and distinct disavowal of the right hon. Gentleman as entirely satisfactory. He was glad the right hon. Baronet had made it; for it had given him an opportunity quite as plea-

sant to his feelings of stating that he too felt regret for the terms in which he had alluded to the right hon. Baronet. He sincerely hoped that all either he (Mr. Cobden) or the right hon. Baronet had previously said on that subject, would be obliterated from their recollection, and that no one on either side of the House, after what had passed that night, would attempt to revive the matter, or make any allusion to it.

Subject at an end.

COMMERCIAL POLICY—CUSTOMS—CORN LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE(TWELFTH NIGHT).

Mr. BANKES, in resuming the Adjourned Debate, said: Sir, I must in one respect regret the delay that has taken place in resuming the adjourned debate this night, because I concur in the wish that has been so generally expressed that we shall this night go to a division. As far as I am concerned, I certainly will not be the occasion of much delay, for I do not intend to follow the example of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton who has preceded me in the debate. I will not most assuredly rival that hon. Gentleman in the length of his speech; and I cannot avoid remarking, that when that hon. Gentleman complained of delay, he ought not to have accompanied the complaint with a speech which to such an extent postponed our arrival at the conclusion which he expressed such a desire to attain. I do not regret, upon this occasion, that the measure now before us has been preceded by one that is really for the relief of Ireland—a measure that is intended and calculated to meet and abate the misery and calamity that have arisen in Ireland. It is calculated, I believe, to meet the present emergency; whilst the greater measure that has been forced on our attention has nothing to do with that calamity, and has not any bearing upon it. I am glad that we may now understand that we are in a condition calmly to consider whether this great measure, forced upon our attention, is one that is fit for our adoption, and that this measure is no longer to be involved in its discussion with the question of the present deficiency of food in Ireland. We are not, as I trust, any longer to be called to do that which ought never even to have been suggested—namely, that a permanent measure should be enacted to meet a temporary inconvenience. I do not see how the two things could ever have been combined together, especially when I recollect what occurred in the year 1822—a year which was alluded to on the previous night by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and when the distress was not only as great, but much greater than it is now in Ireland, or than I hope it ever will be; and when I recollect that in that year of such distress in Ireland there was the greatest glut of corn in England that has ever taken place — when I recollect these circumstances, I ask how can it be supposed that the introduction of foreign corn into England could be a remedy for the distress in Ireland? [Sir R. Peel *rose to leave the House.*] I am sorry to detain the right hon. Baronet; but there is a portion of the observations which I must address to the House that has reference to the transactions in which the right hon. Baronet has taken part, and to this I should not like to give utterance, except in the presence of the right hon. Baronet. I refer to that extraordinary crisis which has been brought about by the right hon. Baronet, in the conduct which he has pursued. It seems to me, and has so appeared to many others, that the course adopted by the right hon. Baronet was unusual, unexampled, and unprecedented—I dare not say the word unconstitutional, in giving my opinion upon the conduct which the right hon. Baronet has thought fit to adopt. Certainly it was absolutely unusual, and, in my opinion, it is not desirable that it should be followed as a precedent. I say this with reference, in the first place, to the manner in which on this occasion the right hon. Baronet has exercised the powers and privileges vested in him as Prime Minister—powers and privileges, I must remark, which are unknown to the Constitution; for the Constitution does not recognise a Prime Minister. But the right hon. Baronet, first, by his influence in the Cabinet of which he was a Member, controlling a large majority of that Cabinet, who decided against his opinions and his views; and afterwards, by the resignation to which he thought fit to resort in consequence of a division in the Cabinet; and then, after he had ceased to be a Minister of the Crown, and had become a private individual, by making a communication to the Sovereign, which had an undoubted tendency to influence, and must have had an influential effect upon, the mind of the Sovereign, the right hon. Baronet being then a private individual, and no longer responsible for his acts —for these proceedings I assert that there

is no precedent. I am sure that this course was without example; though I dare not say that it was unconstitutional, for I do not know the authority to which I could appeal on this point as to the real doctrines and principles of the Constitution; for on these points and principles of the Constitution to what can I refer but to the political actions of our public men? A Gentleman, divested of responsible authority, become a private individual, communicates with the Sovereign, for the avowed purpose of producing an influence on the mind of the Sovereign. We have not, I must remark, the slightest explanation of this transaction. The right hon. Baronet did not recollect these particular circumstances when he first addressed the House: they were stated by a noble Lord opposite. It was by him they were first informed, and that the fact was made known to the House and the public, that when the noble Lord first waited on Her Majesty, in obedience to the summons he had received from Her, for the purpose of forming a Government; and that when he had, in conformity with the resolutions of his friends, stated to Her Majesty that he must decline the attempt to form such a Government, seeing the difficulty in which he was placed, and considering that he was in a minority in the House of Commons; that upon this Her Majesty placed in his hands the letter of the right hon. Gentlemen; and then, said the noble Lord, that made a great difference with me. Thus the letter of the right hon. Baronet had much weight with the noble Lord, and it was plain it had much weight with his Sovereign. I am aware of no instance like this. I am not aware of an instance of a private individual addressing his Sovereign under such circumstances. I am not aware that a private individual has ever before, under such circumstances, stated to his Sovereign that he would give his Parliamentary support to those individuals as Ministers who should pledge themselves to such and such opinions. I am perfectly aware that the right hon. Gentleman has stated that he did not know who was to be his successor. That of course is true; but the politics of the individual, whoever he might be, must be pretty well ascertained in regard to the probability of his receiving encouragement from the production of that important paper. And I may remark, that it was hardly possible that any individual of opposite opinions should be bold enough to assume the reins of Government, when he found such a letter as that in the hands of Her Majesty. However pure were the motives of the right hon. Gentleman—and no one for a moment could doubt their purity—still, I cannot but be apprehensive that these circumstances may give rise to a precedent which will be found dangerous in the highest degree. Here was a person without responsibility, but known to control and guide a large portion of a commanding party, dictating terms of support, which terms are transmitted through the hands of the Sovereign to some person of weight belonging to another political party. I would submit it to the better judgment of the right hon. Gentleman himself, whether such a precedent as this may not become dangerous in the highest degree, and whether the people have not a right to complain. I contend that before we in this House proceed to act upon an unexpected change of opinion, we shall give the people the opportunity of of expressing their will and their opinion. If the people have changed their opinion as Ministers have done, then it is all well. We have then nothing more to do but to bear with it—to submit to it, and to accept it; but still I say, if the people have not so changed, neither the Ministry, nor Members in this House, have a right to stifle the voice of the people. When two parties were thus balanced; when a broken party of the Conservatives were not able to form a Government for themselves, and the Whigs did form a Government for a day and a half, and could stand no longer, what, I ask, could prevent a dissolution, but a coalition between the broken party of the Conservatives on the one side, and the Whigs on the other? We all know, by past experience, the constitutional jealousy that is entertained in this country against the coalition of parties. It implies a sacrifice of principle somewhere, and the country is jealous as to that; and it matters not whether the coalition be for the purposes of patriotism, or for power or place. Men of mean minds may suppose that political coalitions are formed solely for considerations of place or patronage. To men of vulgar minds it may seem as if pecuniary considerations alone could influence statesmen. That is not the thought that suggests itself to those who take a higher and more just view of the conduct of political affairs. They object to such coalition on constitutional grounds. They dislike, and ever have

disliked, to see men acting together whose principles for many years had justly kept them asunder. No man of right feeling could imagine that when a coalition was formed between Lord North, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Burke, men of the highest honour and most unblemished reputation—no man supposed that they had entered into that coalition from the greedy and unworthy desire to share amongst them the spoils of office, the exercise of power, and the gifts of patronage. No one could have believed this of men who were the glory and the ornament of the parties of which each was the respective leader; nevertheless the moment that it was seen that such men were combined together—admirable as they were for their talent, and unsuspected as might be their motives, still the mere act of their coalition so outraged the public feeling, and so injured the general respect for them throughout the country, that these great men never recovered it. I venture to say that coalition is not merely obnoxious, because men, when coalesced, sit on the same bench together: it is equally obnoxious when a principle of combination brings opposing parties to act together, whether united in office or not. In both cases it is equally dangerous—alike calculated to destroy public character, and unduly to influence the Sovereign. A coalition is objectionable in every way, whether the coalition displays itself by men sitting together on the same bench; or whether the one sits on one side the House, and the other on the opposite side, and play into the hands of one another, responding one another's jokes, and joining in the vilification of those who will be no parties to the coalition. What, then, is the course to be pursued? The opponents of the coalition, the representatives too of numerous constituencies, have a right to call upon their public men not to do that which is condemned by public opinion. And when you, who are the great men of this assembly, admit that you have suddenly come to a new determination, and have only very recently recanted those opinions which you formerly avowed—when this happens, we have a right to call upon the Gentlemen on both sides of the House who support the measures, not to combine together to prevent that appeal to the people which the Constitution has given as a bar against rash errors and mistakes. I call upon them not to co-operate and combine together to prevent that, which, if the feelings of the people be regarded, must be resorted to—a dissolution of Parliament before we can with any propriety consent to pass this Bill. I speak not without authority. The noble Lord the Member for London was the first by a few days to announce his change of opinion; for his letter was published in November, and the change of opinion in the Cabinet was not revealed by the *Times* newspaper until the 4th of December. And the noble Lord, in his views of this question, which he supports with all the energy and vigour that distinguish the zeal of a recent convert, observed, "If this end is to be achieved, it must be by the unequivocal expression of the public voice. It is not to be denied that many of the elections for cities and towns in 1841, and some in 1845, appear to favour the assertion that free trade is not popular with the great mass of the constituency." The noble Lord might have added the year 1846, in which every election, without exception, has gone in favour of the agriculturists. [*Cries of* "Yorkshire."] I beg pardon, I will speak of that presently. [Sir J. Graham: Westminster.] "Westminster!" Oh, I wish you joy of Westminster. Where is the future Lord of the Admiralty? But the right hon. Baronet who interrupted me, must permit me to say, that if he contradicts my opinion of the sentiments of the constituencies, here is a point of controverted opinion to be decided. Why, then, not go to the country upon it? I defy you. And now for the election for Yorkshire. That might have been a triumph under ordinary circumstances; but I am bound to say that the mode in which the noble Lord has achieved his triumph, must neutralize the effects of it. I remember the days before the Reform Bill; and when a Gentleman in this House, with few constituents, made a most able speech, it was thought a sufficient answer to him to say, that he represented only the money in his breeches pocket. That was then deemed a sufficient reply to eloquence and argument; and now, I say to the noble Lord the Member for Yorkshire, that he represents the 5*l.* note which he sent to the hon. Member for Stockport, and who said, and said truly, on receiving it, that that 5*l.* note was as good as 5,000*l.* And so it was. But where is the credit or the honour to the noble Lord? And when we hear so much against delegates, let me ask, who is a delegate, if that noble Lord is not one? Where there has been no interference by that powerful League—whose power I am not here to deny,

when I see to what it has reduced a great party and a powerful Ministry—in those parts of the kingdom where the electors have been uninfluenced by their power and endeavours, the freedom of election passed as it was wont, and as it ought to do, by men giving their votes in the places in which they resided, and where they were known, without being brought from a distance, as they used to be under that which was once called the corrupt system of non-resident voting. Show me the place where there has been a free English election, and I will show that a Protectionist Member has been returned. I understand that in Yorkshire 2,000 votes were boasted to have been purchased for the service of the Anti-Corn-Law League. Where, then, was the triumph of the noble Lord who sat for the West Riding? And where is the contradiction to my assertion, that the voice of the people, when left unbiassed, and permitted to exercise that freedom which the Constitution provides, has uniformly given a verdict in favour of the principle of protection? Shall I take the last and most striking instance—the election for the county of Nottingham, the Member for which has not taken his seat to-night; and I do not know why, though another county Member, who was elected only this morning, has taken his seat to-day? It is perfectly true that every legal agent in Nottinghamshire has been retained against the hon. Gentleman who is returned. Whether that was in the hon. Gentleman's favour, it is not for me to say; at all events, it is not that which turned the election. I believe it was turned upon other grounds and upon other principles; and if there could be a circumstance to convince the House that the Constitution of England was sound, and that the voice of the people, whether it reached the ear of the Minister or not, will still make itself heard, I conceive it to be the result of the Nottinghamshire election. Here was a noble Lord, with everything to recommend him—talent, character, and honour unimpeached: he went down, avowedly patronised by the Government of which he was an ornament, with the confident hope, if they believed, as they must do, all that fell from his lips, of being completely successful. To read the statements contained in his addresses, it would seem as if nothing could be more certain than his success; so certain, indeed, that it was even more certain than the success of this Bill in Parliament. The noble Lord assured the electors that it was of no use to talk of the passing of that Bill—it was as good as passed. Peers were every day sending in their adhesion, and the Government would have a majority of 100 in their favour! No doubt with equal sincerity, and equally confident of his success there, as he was here, the noble Lord wrote up to his friends in London, and said, nothing can be more certain than our success here (in Nottinghamshire), for the freeholders are every day sending in their adhesions, and my majority is certain. In one of his addresses to the electors, the noble Lord asked, "Where is my antagonist? Echo answers, 'Where?'" I will ask, "Where is now the noble Lord? Echo answers, 'Where?'" We not only do not know where he is, but the right hon. Baronet will not tell us when he is coming, or when we may hope for him. If ever there was a fair trial of political strength made in any part of the kingdom, it was that which has taken place in Nottingham—a county not of an unmixed agricultural character, the candidate being of such high standing, and going down with such hopes and such confidence. If he could meet defeat, may we not also suppose that a like result may attend the Bill that is now before the House? At all events, the right hon. Baronet must admit that it is not an isolated circumstance, and that, accompanied as it is by the verdict of other county constituencies, the result may be the same elsewhere. Am I asking too much, when the fate of Ireland, it is admitted, does not depend on this measure; when the necessity which has been put forward as—I will not say the pretence, but—the reason for this attempt, is given up and abandoned; and when we admit that there is no occasion for haste, alarm, or anxiety—is it too much to ask that we should allow the agricultural interest to have that which it demands, namely, the expression of opinion by the whole constituency? Different opinions have been given with regard to those Members who have resigned their seats, as well as with respect to those who, having changed their opinions, have retained them. Now, some hon. Members have adopted a middle course, by partly resigning and partly retaining their seats. The hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Bright) chose to be pleasant with hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, and observed that, considering we were all going to execution, we looked remarkably well. I remember the

old and well-known ballad of Prior's, descriptive of a man going to execution; and it struck me that it very much resembled not our case, but the case of those half-resigned Gentlemen:—

"Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,
And often took leave, but seemed loth to depart."

Let the House refer to what may be considered the best authority upon the subject of hon. Members altering their opinions, and yet retaining their seats. This is the authority which I find upon the Table of our House, contained in the well-known columns of "Hatsell's Precedents;" who thus sums up his observations on this point:—

"I will now give an authority which no man will be inclined to dispute. Algernon Sidney, in his 'Discourse concerning Government,' said—speaking of the power of delegates—'It is not, therefore, for Kent or Sussex, Lewes or Maidstone, but for the whole nation, that the Members chosen in these places are sent to serve in Parliament; and though it be fit for them, as friends and neighbours, to hearken to the opinion of their electors for the information of their judgment, and to the end that what they shall say may be of more weight, yet they are not strictly and properly obliged to give an account of their actions to them. And,' he added, 'the only punishment (and this was a very material point for the House to observe) to which they are subject, if they betray their trust, is scorn, infamy, hatred, and an assurance of being rejected when they shall again seek the same office.'"

Now, the law was one way: honour seemed to be another. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. Villiers), the other night, observed that I had expressed alarm at seeing a person at the head of the Government who so much resembled in political conduct, Necker or Turgot. I did express that sentiment; I did feel that alarm; I feel it still. And I agree with the hon. Member when he said, that this particular crisis does put him very much in mind of the opening period of the French revolution—viz., the period which elapsed from the year 1781 to the year 1789. I have found, in an author who has written very eloquently of that period, a statement which does embody my own views in language much happier and more powerful than I ever hope to attain to: having opened a volume of Mr. Alison's "Modern Europe," I found these words:—

"The exciting cause, a physician would say, of the French revolution was the spirit of innovation, which, like a malady, overspread France at that crisis, precipitated all classes into a passion for changes, of which they were far from perceiving the ultimate effects; and the most ardent in the cause of innovation were those whose fortunes were about to perish from its effects. The young nobles applauded without ever suspecting that they would be the first victims of such opinions."

There were at that time Lord Lincolns—young nobles who thought themselves wiser than other men; and there were there sons who ranged themselves against their fathers; and in addition to the public mischiefs that were induced, the system of the social relations of private life and of family connection was destroyed. The author last quoted thus gave his estimate of the character of Neckar, the Minister of that day:—

"His private character was unexceptionable. Possessed of immense wealth, he made a noble use of it—liberal without either pride or prodigality. He would have been a perfect citizen had it not been for a vein of ostentation and a secret vanity, which afterwards, by making him sacrifice every thing to his love of popularity, brought unheard-of disasters on the monarchy."

The character of Turgot was also well drawn in Mr. Alison's work:—

"Had Turgot united to those great and good qualities (for a better and greater minded man there never lived), an adequate knowledge of human nature, he would have been an invaluable Minister. But, unhappily, he laboured under one great defect, which, not only proved his own ruin, but rendered him the most dangerous guide. He was entirely ignorant of human nature; was rigid and unaccommodating in his ideas; and pursued his designs without any consideration of the effect they were to produce either upon the persons likely to be injured, or those intended to be benefited by his reforms."

Now, without any impropriety, I may say that I can find in this country a parallel to the characters here described; and that the faults and failings attributed to those eminent but unfortunate men are the faults of our present Chief Minister. Ignorant as I assert that right hon. Gentleman to be of the public feeling, I charge him with having unduly, not only avoided, but contrived, if I may use that word without intending offence—contrived to prevent recurrence to the public voice at a period when he might have been convinced of his error. It is true that Algernon Sydney has laid down the law as I have read it to the House; but he did not then contemplate septennial Parliaments; he did not imagine that Parliaments would last so long as they do in the present day; and I believe that many will begin to doubt whether it would not be wise to shorten their duration. When great changes took place in the minds of public men, the advice which should be given to the Sovereign, and the advice which Lord John Russell must have given, unless he had some support beyond that upon which he usually relied, was to appeal to the country. But then there took place

a sort of political compromise between the great leaders, to which I have alluded. Recurring to that strange incident (for so I must call it), the letter of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) to Her Majesty, dated the 8th of December last, the day after he quitted office; I do not dispute the propriety of one political leader going out of office communicating with another who is to succeed him; but that communication need not pass, and ought not to pass, through the medium of the Sovereign. In the course pursued in the present instance, there was, as I have observed, the almost ensured impossibility of a trial by the Sovereign of any persons who held other opinions than those which had been so strongly impressed upon Her mind. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) held office for almost a day and a half; and he could not deny that the cause lately assigned by him for abandoning the attempt to form a Government was not the only one. I think it is better to speak plain English, and at once say that the noble Lord had found that if he were in office, and received the support of the right hon. Baronet, when out of office the right hon. Gentleman would probably bring but very few of his followers with him; while, on the other side, so much more patriotic were those who were under the leadership of the noble Lord, and so much despising all considerations but those of patriotism and the public good, that the noble Lord could command every man of them to march to the support of the right hon. Baronet. That is the real English of the whole transaction. The true history of the matter is, that the noble Lord found he could have but an uncertain support from those who might be the adherents of the right hon. Baronet, should the right hon. Gentleman be out of office; but, if the right hon. Gentleman remained in office, the noble Lord would bring his whole force to the aid of the Government; and for the purpose of accomplishing this great change would carry him boldly forward against the voice of the people; for against the voice of the people they both know it to be, or why are they so fearful of appealing to the country? We are told, however, that the voice of the people may be heard; and the noble Lord, in his letter to the citizens of London, spoke of petitions. Why, we have had a pretty lesson on petitioning here to-night—a lesson that will make us for a long time hesitate before giving much weight to petitions represented to come from the people. No, let me have their votes. Let me see them face to face. Let them have promises, if promises hon. Gentlemen think fit to give; and, having given them, let them take care that they keep those promises. In the course of this debate the right hon. Baronet said there was something very inconvenient and unpleasant in those promises; but it is a part of our system and established usage for candidates to appear before the electors whose suffrages they solicit. There is a regular day of nomination for hearing the statements of the candidates, and questioning them; and if candidates are to become so cautious and chary of their language, as the right hon. Baronet would have them to be, I very much doubt whether the right hon. Baronet will have many supporters in a future Parliament. I am not aware that the voters are obliged to take persons merely on account of their looks. I rather suspect they will still continue that very inconvenient practice of putting questions to candidates, and expecting answers, and that when the answer is given they will expect the man who gave it to stand by it. It was stated the other day that an hon. Member of that House, who entertained strong opinions on Irish subjects, had an interview with Lord Lincoln, and came out confessing that he was entirely satisfied. Can I imagine that the noble Lord, having answered the hon. elector's inquiries, will depart from what he had said to him? And if bound to that hon. Gentleman, is he not equally bound to the humblest man in the crowd who asks his opinion, puts question to him, and insists upon hearing on what principles it is that he solicits the suffrages of the electors? Is there any difference in rank or station that enables persons safely to despise a promise because it was made to one who belonged to an inferior class of the community? No such doctrine as that, I am sure, will be maintained in this House. Unless we do away with the whole principle upon which elections were established, we must be content to see Members vacate their seats, and appeal again to their constituencies for the purpose of ascertaining if they will receive them upon principles different from those upon which they were accepted upon the first occasion. If there be one circumstance more advantageous than another in the principle of our Constitution, it is this, that when matters of doubt arise in the great tribunal of the

nation, hon. Members are able to say, "We have now the means of ascertaining what the feelings of the people are;" and to those feelings it is that I appeal on the present momentous question. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who has been the only person that has taken exception to the length of the debate—though he has himself occupied between two and three hours in the delivery of his speech—has been pleased to say, that we have no right to approach the question in its present stage, and that we ought to say we decline entering now upon the discussion. Now it is precisely because we at present decline entering upon the full discussion of the question, that we have taken the debate on this stage. We say that if the measure be right, which we assert it is not—if it be expedient, and we maintain the contrary—if it be beneficial, as we think it will prove injurious—it will be hurtful to a degree beyond that of any advantage which can ever be expected to be derived from it, if you pass this measure after the manner Gentlemen opposite seem to desire, or if you pass it in this Parliament; and if, for that reason, we now appear here to make that stand—to say that until we have been assured that the minds of the people have changed, as well as the minds of the right hon. and hon. Gentlemen, which have most wonderfully changed, we shall not feel ourselves justified in belying the expectations of those who have elected us—expectations to which we have given every encouragement, and we do not feel satisfied that we should act honestly or honourably by entertaining the question for the purpose of carrying it out at the present time;—for that reason we have taken our present course, instead of wasting days and hours in debates upon the different particulars of this measure. It was for the purpose of saving time, as for other reasonable objects, that we shall take the division upon this stage; and whatever may be the result here—feeling, as we must feel, the power of such a combination as will be brought against us, of men the most opposed in principle—of men who have never before united, and whom the country grieves to see united—whatever may be the result here, we trust that in another place—we believe that in another place, a delay will happen which shall give an opportunity to the people to declare their opinions and feelings on the subject. When I remember that there is another place where that measure must be submitted to consideration before it becomes law; and when I know that in that other place the votes of our proceedings are received, and scanned, and read; and when I am aware that year after year, during the whole existence of the present Government, in those Votes have been inscribed large divisions on that very question, in which enormous majorities have declared that this House could not sanction such a proposition as that now laid before them—can I suppose if there is wisdom, experience, and justice (as I know there is) in that other House, when they shall see, uncalled for by any circumstance in public affairs, so strange a change as this, which is utterly unexplained by anything that we have heard—can I think but that the Members of that other House will at once see that so rapid and sudden a change on the part of this branch of the Legislature, calls for some pause and hesitation on their part, and gives ground for them to use the prerogative they possess, of counselling the Crown to apply to the people to know whether they are or are not willing to become parties to this great, extraordinary, and extravagant change?

Mr. ESCOTT should give his vote on this great question, in the full hope that the course he had elected would tend to the future advantage of the country, and with a full consideration of what public honour required. [*Interruption from some Protection Members.*] Hon. Gentlemen had a perfect right to differ from him in opinion; but he trusted that, at least, they would hear him without interruption. It appeared to him that this question naturally divided itself into two parts: the one, whether the proposed measure was likely in its effects to produce benefits to the country; and the other, practically almost as important, could the carrying of such a measure possibly be prevented now? He would begin with the latter; and his proposition was, that the carrying of some such measure could not, in the present state of the country and of parties, be prevented. Hon. Gentlemen who talked so much about deluding the farmers, and who were constant in their professions of defending the farmers, had better at once tell them whether they did really believe the carrying of the measure could any longer be avoided. He wished that the two questions he had propounded had occupied a little more time in the debate; and that a third question, which had taken up so much space, had been considered only in subservience to

them—namely, whether the Government, or the hon. Gentlemen who sat on the other side, were the proper persons to carry the measure? for that was viewed by the country as a point of very minor importance. He had been accused by the hon. Member for Knaresborough of a dereliction of his duty to his constituents in the course he was about to take; but with respect to the hon. Member for Knaresborough, he would at once say, considering what had passed in the earlier part of this very evening, that the best way was not to enter into any personal altercation with an hon. Member of so peculiar a character; but merely to say, in justice to those who were absent, that the statement that hon. Member had made on a former evening, with respect to his (Mr. Escott) having been called upon by his constituents to resign his seat in that House, had not the shadow of foundation in fact; and so far from its being fact, his constituents had not only not called upon him to resign, but not one single individual of them had indicated the opinion that he ought to resign. So much in justice to them. But there was another Member, a noble Lord, who had done him the honour to allude to him in pointed terms. That noble Lord had been pleased to say that he could not perceive how it was consistent with his (Mr. Escott's) personal honour to support the Motion for going into this Committee. At that time he had answered the noble Lord perhaps a little hastily; but he now, on reflection, begged to state to the noble Lord—and it was important as regarding the personal questions which had taken up so much time in this debate—what he thought on so important a matter as the personal honour of a Member of that House. He thought, in the first place, the personal honour of a Member of Parliament did not consist in bartering away his independence to gain the votes of his electors. He thought that, when a Gentleman came into that House, it was his duty to give up his time daily and nightly to promote the interests of the country; and, to put a modern instance, if a Gentleman came into the House ignorant of the general questions of political economy which were occupying its attention, it was his duty to make himself master of those questions, considering his responsibility as a representative of the people. Or, supposing him to be a Minister of the Crown, it was still more his duty to make himself master of the principles on which such questions must be decided, and to neglect the maintenance of a character for personal consistency in order to attain that much higher character, of being a good and efficient servant of the public. That was his idea of the personal honour of a Member of Parliament. But to resume the consideration of the question before the House—he protested that in all this remarkable debate there was nothing which excited his surprise more than to hear hon. Members express their amazement that such measures should be proposed by these Ministers: they say they did not anticipate it. Where were their senses of anticipation? From the night, in the year 1842, on which the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, and the Gentleman who lately filled the office of Vice President of the Board of Trade, delivered their well-known speeches on the subject of the new Tariff; he (Mr. Escott) not only anticipated, as a likely contingency, some such measure as that which was now in contemplation, but he regarded such a measure as the natural and inevitable consequence of the measures which the House sanctioned in the year 1842, and the principles upon which the hon. Members who introduced those measures sought to justify them. He did not think it necessary to mention names; but he could assure the House that certain personages, whom he highly respected, and to whom he felt himself under obligations, had done him the honour to ask him his opinion respecting the aspect of public affairs; and he had invariably told them that the total and unqualified repeal of all protective duties, must, sooner or later, be the consequence of the arguments which had been propounded by the Ministers and sanctioned by the House. He could not for his life understand what was the meaning of hon. Gentlemen lifting their eyes, throwing up their hands, and exclaiming in amazement, that they had been taken by surprise. Why, the fact was, nothing could be more natural than the course which events were taking. Since the year '42 there had been repeated speeches on the Corn Laws in that House, but he, for one, could safely affirm that during that period he had never heard a single argument from the Treasury benches in favour of the principle of protection. [*Cries of* "Oh!" and "No."] Hon. Gentlemen might cry "oh," and "no," but he repeated his assertion. For the last four or five years he had not heard an argument in favour of the principle of

protection from the Treasury benches. He had heard some clever speeches made for the purpose of evading the question altogether; but he had never heard an argument during that period in defence of the principle. He must say that it appeared to him that there was not a little inconsistency in the conduct of certain of the hon. Gentlemen who were now so strenuously opposing the policy of the Government. For instance, the hon. Member for Somersetshire appeared to be absolutely horrified at the prospect of abundance. He appeared to regard it as one of the most calamitous of the consequences that could result from repealing the Corn Laws. He seemed to view with horror the bare possibility of a vast quantity of corn or other things, good to eat, being imported into the country; and yet at the very moment while his mind was scared by such appalling visions of prosperity, there were human beings in the vicinity of his own farms, who, but for the mildness of the winter and the extraordinary supply of greens and turnip tops, would at this time have been reduced to starvation or the workhouse. There was no one whose indignation was more warmly excited than the hon. Member's by the contemplation of the proposed relaxations in the protective system; and yet the hon. Member had, during the course of last Session, laid on the Table of the House with his own hands no less than 110 petitions against the Corn Laws. In those petitions—for he had read some of them — the petitioners represented the Corn Law as the destruction of the agricultural interests; and yet that system was now defended (and by no one more fervidly than by the hon. Member himself) as affording the only sure foundation for the prosperity of those interests. The hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford University, had advanced this startling doctrine, that the relaxation of the protective duties would consequently involve the ruin of the great and immemorial institutions of the country. He had never heard any doctrine propounded inside that House or out of it which had excited so much surprise, and indeed he would say so much indignation, in his mind as this. What! would they place the preservation of the institutions of a country on the maintenance of restrictions upon the food of a people who had scarcity—nay, perhaps, famine—staring them in the face? If hon. Gentlemen meant to contend for such a proposition as that, he would tell them that the history of nations afforded no instance but this solitary one of the institutions of a free country being supported upon such arguments. When Mr. Pitt had to meet scarcity, and to repeal the Corn Law, he never talked about injury to the institutions of this great Empire. No; he manfully abolished all protective duties, and thus — no matter what might be the character of his general policy in other respects—discharged the first and most important of the duties of a Minister, by taking care that the people should be fed. He remembered an able lecturer on political history, who sat on the same side of the House with him, having reminded the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Russell) that, let the merits of his party be what they might in other respects, he had no right to claim for them the introduction and original advocacy of free-trade principles, for that that honourable distinction belonged as of right to Mr. Pitt, the Tory Minister, who was the first to study the doctrines of the great economists, and the first to teach senates to be the exponents of those doctrines. Yes, said the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, the glory belonged as of right to the Tory party; and yet the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government was now styled a "traitor" to his party, and branded with apostacy, because he advocated a relaxation of the protective system, and that by the same hon. Gentleman. But he would next ask how they could contend for a restricted trade in grain with the present prospects of this country and Ireland with respect to a supply of food for the population. The right hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin had declared that the rumours respecting the approach of scarcity in Ireland had been greatly exaggerated; but he had made inquiries on the subject from persons connected with Ireland, and he was led to believe that the reports had not been in the least overstated. He believed that the hon. and learned Gentleman had been misinformed; and he placed more reliance on the Reports which were lying on the Table of their own House, and on the statements of the clergy of Ireland, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, representing the prospects of Ireland as most appalling, than he did on the individual representations of any Member whatever. Nor was it the Irish population alone that was in danger. In parts of England there was nearly as much reason to fear scarcity as in any district of Ireland. In his own neighbourhood at least one-half of the

whole food of the people consisted of potatoes; and he believed he was warranted in the statement that one-half of their stock of potatoes on an average had been destroyed. In the West of England, many persons had already lost their whole crop, which, under ordinary circumstances, ought to have lasted till June. Others had lost half, and others (and they not the smallest proportion) had but a very scanty quantity indeed yet remaining; and yet this was the moment when hon. Gentlemen stood up and exclaimed that the institutions of the country would be ruined if food were admitted. The hon. Member for Oxford University implored the Government not to interfere with the present peaceable and prosperous condition of the country; he cried *Quieta non movere.* Peaceable indeed! It was his (Mr. Escott's) conscientious belief that, within three months from that period, in districts surrounding his own dwelling, the quiet which would be found to prevail would be the quiet of the grave, unless some effective measures were taken in time for feeding the people. It was with such prospects as these before them, that the hon. Baronet took for his motto, *Quieta non movere.* Was that a time for hon. Members to clamour for the maintenance of a law whose operation it was to make food dear? ["No, no."] They cried "No, no;" but if it was not the effect of the Corn Law to raise the price of corn, what was the use of the Corn Law at all? And if it was indeed true that it had such an effect, how could they reconcile it to their consciences to struggle for the maintenance of such a law while starvation was impending over the people? In the last Session he had taken the liberty to give notice of a Motion for the introduction of maize duty free. He thought it would be of great benefit to the agriculturists, and would assist the farmers to feed their stock. But he must explain himself fully. He never for one moment imagined that the importation of maize alone would be sufficient, and that they were to stop there. He never meant anything like that, but intended that it should be a preparatory step to the removal of every restriction. He thought the introduction of maize would prove useful to the farmer; for what, he (Mr. Escott) asked, was the great deficiency of the country independent of the failure of the potato crop? It was the supply of meat. What they wanted was, more meat in the country, and if they had more food for their stock they would be able to graze more meat. They not only would be able to graze more meat and feed the people better, but every farmer and grazier in the country would be better off. If the House would allow him for one moment, he would examine into that subject. When he gave his notice he felt the strongest impression that the severest evils under which the farmer laboured arose from the difficulty of obtaining food for his stock. He had made inquiries on the subject in his neighbourhood; he had received some curious information; he would mention one instance. He would take the case of a cattle dealer who was accustomed to travel through an extensive district of country, comprising all sorts of land; he asked him if he did not think that during winter and spring great distress was caused by the want of some food that might be substituted for that which was so scarce; and he told him that in his experience he could without hesitation say, that out of all the heads of cattle in that district one out of twenty had died from sheer starvation. Now, let the House mark what he was going to say. At that very time, in a market town in that district, an enterprising merchant had a large store of maize, which he had imported from the United States on speculation; but he could not sell one bushel of that maize, because he could not take it out of bond without paying the duty; and the payment of the duty rendered it too dear for any farmer in that district to purchase it as food for his cattle. Thus it happened that, at the very time when one out of every twenty head of stock was lost in that district, there was abundance of food to be had, if the farmers were only allowed to put their hands upon it and help themselves; but in consequence of the high duty to be paid upon it they were unable to do so, and this was called protecting agriculture. He had consulted a small farmer on that very point, with a view to ascertain if it would not be a very great advantage to him if he could have cheap maize, and oats, and peas, or any other cheap food for his cattle during the last year; and he told him that he had lost within 10*l.* of his whole rent during the last winter, by the increased price he had to give for hay and corn, and the decreased value of his stock. He told him, in addition to this, that he had three beasts which would be worth to him 20*l.* a-piece if he could have kept them to Midsummer: but he was obliged to sell them about Lady-day, in a state in which they were not worth 3*l.* a piece, and in fact not

fit for human food. That was entirely owing to the want of food, and that occurred within three miles of the very town in which there was that large store of maize. The wonder was that they had gone on so well as they had to the present moment; certainly it was not owing to the existence of this law; and it was also wonderful, that in a great commercial country like England, with a population that was rapidly increasing, with all the means of obtaining from other countries those advantages which they did not possess themselves, such a restrictive system should continue to exist. But whether some farmers were to suffer or not, would the hon. Gentleman who opposed this Bill once for all manfully tell them what it was they meant to do? He wished to ask them, did they think they could govern this country with the Duke of Richmond as Prime Minister? He had already stated what induced him to think it was impossible for them any longer to maintain this law; and one of the reasons why they could not maintain the law was, the extremely erroneous choice they had made of leaders. He was under a strong impression that one of the greatest mistakes that ever was made by the protection interest—he could not call it the agricultural interest, for it was not the agricultural interest—the greatest mistake that was ever made by the protection interest was the deposing of the Duke of Buckingham from their leadership, and setting up the Duke of Richmond. The Duke of Buckingham, to the best of his knowledge, had never argued for protection on the starvation principle; but the Duke of Richmond was only celebrated for two sayings, one of which was, "In Sussex we don't grow glass, but we do grow timber," which, if it meant anything, meant ours is a selfish principle. He asked, could such a man wage a successful war with the hon. Gentlemen opposite—with the hon. Member for Stockport—with the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, and with the electoral constituencies of England? He believed he could not. He believed that with the Reform Bill—with the new town and old county constituencies—with the hon. Member for Stockport, and others who thought with him—his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury would, on this question, beat the Duke of Richmond and twenty like him. In former times, when the nobility of this country had not any one of their own rank sufficiently practised in public affairs to direct the destinies of the country, and sway the opinions of senates, they were accustomed to choose as their leader some commoner of practised ability, and trust to him to interpose the ægis of his talents between them and the civil tempest. Five years ago they found such a man—ready to fight their battle so long as it could be fought with advantage to the people—the only honourable civil warfare; and now, when he refused to lead them against the people and against his own honour, why they were determined to get rid of him, and do the battle of their own protection on their own account. He did not think it was the duty of a party leader to lead his party against the interests of the people. He felt that the only contest in which he could take part with advantage to his followers, was to go with the people, and prove to the people that the interests which he defended were not adverse to their own. Why, now he hoped that in order there might be no more deceiving the farmers on this question, the protectionists would tell their friends whether they thought this contest was to end in the triumph of protection. He wanted them to tell the farmers plainly and honestly, whether they thought the contest would end in defeat or victory. If they thought —and he believed they did in their consciences—that the issue must be defeat, why not then consent to put up at once with what they could not avoid? Had they not much better, he asked, refrain from exasperating the people already in a state of great want? His hon. Friend the Member for Somerset (Mr. Miles) said the people were not in want; but he wished his hon. Friend was in the House when he stated what he should not repeat as to the condition of the people in his county. He wished he would inquire into the condition of the people, and then say whether they were in want or not. He now said they were not in want; but he was the first person that he (Mr. Escott) ever yet heard had the hardihood to deny that the people were at that moment in a state of want. He would like to know from his hon. Friend, whether the famine to which the people were exposed at this moment was a state of prosperity? He (Mr. Escott) knew he did not think so—he knew that if he examined into those things, he would not make those sort of speeches, or express such horror of plenty. He knew that if the hon. Member took the trouble to examine this subject, he would not make such

statements—he knew his goodness of heart—he knew his high principle—he knew his excellent character—and he knew he would not express such horror of plenty, if he knew the actual state of the people. [Mr. MILES never had used the expression "horror of plenty."] No, he might never have used those words; but in effect he thought he never heard his hon. Friend make a speech without introducing some such observation: it was his staple commodity. He always dreaded the increase of corn and bacon, and he was always dolorous about loaded trenchers. His hon. Friend had certainly greased the wheels of the free-trade coach. He had been alarmed about the introduction of grease, and compelled his hon. Friend the Vice President of the Board of Trade to promise that the grease should be mixed with tar. He had told him then he was bringing the whole principle into contempt. So it was. Those were the arguments that opened the eyes of the people; and no one in the country had really done more for the removal of restrictions from imports than the hon. Member for Somersetshire. And he was convinced that when he found the removal of those restrictions would be for the benefit of the country, no man would be more gratified at that object being effected than the hon. Member; but, at all events, let him not delude the farmers: the question was virtually decided. There were none who knew better than the farmers that progress in legislation could not be resisted, and that to resist an importation of food when the people were in want, could not be for their benefit, nor for the safety and honour of their country.

CAPTAIN GLADSTONE: If I had succeeded, Sir, in catching your eye at an earlier period of the debate, I should not have ventured to enter at any length upon the question before the House, much less shall I do so at this protracted period, when every argument and illustration that could be brought to bear upon the subject has been exhausted, and endless statistics quoted, some of them pressed into the service and obliged to do double duty, thus proving the most opposite conclusions. I shall, therefore, confine myself to stating very briefly the reasons which induce me to vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol. Before I do so I trust I may be allowed, in common with other hon. Members who have preceded me, to express the deep and painful regret which I feel at being compelled to vote against Her Majesty's Ministers on so important a question. No one can be more sensible than I am of the sincerity of their motives, or feel more confident that nothing but the strongest sense of public duty could have induced them to take the course they have done, and place themselves in so painful a position towards a large portion of their former supporters. I was quite prepared, Sir, to have supported them in their former policy, which since 1842 has been repealing the duty on raw materials used in manufactures, removing prohibitory duties, and gradually reducing protective ones. But this, Sir, is a very different course, and cannot be considered a cautious and gradual one: it is impossible to doubt that, with protection to agriculture, all protective duties will be removed; and I think the hon. Gentlemen, members of the League, showed great judgment and discretion in directing their attacks against agricultural protection, well knowing that when the Corn Laws were repealed, all the other protected interests would fall an easy prey. Many hon. Members who have addressed the House, and also Members of the Government, have declared that the proposed measures are only a development of the principles laid down in 1842: if such be the case, why did the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, and the Secretary at War, declare that their opinions on the subject of protection had undergone a change; and that even if the potato panic had not occurred, that they could no longer defend the present Corn Laws? Sir, I cannot coincide in the opinions of many hon. Members who have spoken in favour of protection. I do not hold extreme opinions on the subject: it is not necessary for me now to say whether I consider protection in the abstract right or not; but I find that it has long existed in this country; that under it this country has greatly prospered; and that manufactures as well as agriculture have benefited under it. I consider, Sir, that is not a sufficient reason to say that cotton and other branches of manufacture are now independent of protection, and, therefore, that protection should no longer be afforded to agriculture. The cotton manufacture was at one time protected against that of the muslins of India, as has already been stated in this debate, and ultimately succeeded in destroying it. Manufactures and agriculture are very differently circumstanced; for many years capital and mechanical skill have been applied with great advantage to the former; while it is only

of late years that capital and mechanical skill and chemistry have been applied to the latter. It seems impossible to doubt that the effect of the proposed measure must be to lower the prices of agricultural produce; and I cannot conceive that such a result will increase the inducement on the part of landowners and capitalists to invest capital in the improvement of land. Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester, who spoke last, has described the state of the small farmers in his neighbourhood under the present law; but what will it be under the new one? I think many hon. Members were not in the House when the hon. Baronet the Member for Southwark spoke: I consider one part of his speech well worthy the attention of hon. Members, and I have not heard it contradicted. He stated that hon. Members who advocate protection called this a tenant's and not a landlord's question; and he proceeded to show that it concerned the landlord more than the tenant, for the latter would be able to make a new arrangement; but what did he say with regard to the small tenants? He said, "The farmer, that was the farmer who possessed capital and skill, and whose farm was not confined within narrow limits, would be benefited; but he admitted that this was the only class of farmers who would be benefited by free trade. There was another class of farmers, those who were the occupiers of small farms, that class of whom the hon. Member for Northampton gave a description on a previous night, and whose ruin he depicted in vivid colours, as the consequences of the right hon. Baronet's free-trade measures, would, no doubt, under the influence of competition, ultimately cease to exist." If this is to be their fate, can it be wondered at that the farmers of the counties of Dorset and Nottingham should be opposed to the measure. I believe, Sir, that four-fifths of the farmers of England, and a far larger proportion of those of Ireland, come under this denomination. What then is to become of them? Are they to be forced into the manufacturing districts, or how are they to find means to eke out a living? I have not heard this statement contradicted; and think it is well worth the consideration of Her Majesty's Government and hon. Members generally. Sir, I deeply regret the statements made by the First Lord of the Treasury relative to the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, and the apprehension of scarcity in that country; and I rejoice to find that measures to provide employment for the people of that country have been brought forward by the Government, and have passed this House; and shall be glad to hear that they have other similar measures under consideration. I have recently been in that country, and made it my duty to inquire into the extent of the disease, and the prospects of the peasantry of that country; and fear there is too much reason to apprehend scarcity of food before summer, more particularly in the south, where they are most dependent on potatoes, and least able to buy wheat or oaten meal. But I regret that, as one reason given for the necessity of passing this measure is the benefit of Ireland, that part of it which is expected to have that effect was not brought in as a separate measure, but connected with others affecting so many interests, that much time must necessarily elapse before it can pass into a law: but the hon. Member for Wolverhampton declared last night that the reason that hon. Members advocating the cause of protection on this side of the House are willing that the ports should be opened now, is, because no corn can come in owing to the scarcity on the Continent: what becomes, therefore, of the assertion, that on account of Ireland it is necessary to pass the measure without delay? I am quite willing to admit the beneficial effects of the Tariff of 1842; but I believe there never was a period when so many causes combined, independently of it, to promote the prosperity of the country: in 1842, owing to the previous depression of trade, stocks, both in this country and abroad, were very low; since then, the improved state of credit in the United States, and consequent increase of trade with this country, the extension of our trade with China, and that which I think has not been alluded to in this debate, and which has been most important in its effects—the large crops of cotton in the United States, and consequently unprecedentedly low price of cotton, which has enabled our manufacturers greatly to increase their exports. To these causes are to be added the blessings of abundant harvests, and the demand for employment caused by the railroads in progress. The present prosperous state of the country, therefore, cannot be attributed solely to the Tariff of 1842; but even if it were so, it would not follow, that because the removal of all duties on raw materials used in manufacture, as well as those of a prohibitory character, and the gradual reduction of protective duties, have proved beneficial, that the withdrawal of all pro-

tection to native industry will prove so. But, Sir, there is one consideration which weighs with me more heavily than any other; and it is, that this measure should not have been brought forward by Her Majesty's Ministers in this Parliament: if we are to have free trade, let it be passed by a Parliament elected for that purpose, and not by one pledged to uphold protection. It is said that it is desirable to settle the question; but how can this be a settlement of it, when in a short period at any rate a dissolution must take place, when the agricultural interest will endeavour to restore protection? The assertion is, that the public mind is in favour of free trade; if so, I suppose the agriculturists are not supposed to have any mind, as the late county elections prove that they are strongly opposed to it. The agitation and angry feelings that would be caused by a general election, are urged as a reason against it; but I conceive that in the present prosperous state of the country this evil would be much less felt, and that passing this measure in the present Parliament will be much more injurious and lasting in its effects; being calculated to shake confidence in public men, and to establish a system of demanding pledges from candidates at future elections. Sir, I have only now to thank the House for the kind attention they have given to one so little accustomed to address them. Should it be the pleasure of the House to go into Committee, there are parts of the measure to which little opposition, on the part of the interests affected, will be given, and which I shall feel it my duty to support; but being convinced that the main feature of the whole is the total repeal of the Corn Laws, clearly shown by the general character of the discussion, and feeling strongly that it is most desirable that that great portion of the community interested in agriculture should, at the earliest possible period, know its fate, I feel compelled to endeavour to stop the measure on the threshold, and to vote for the Amendment.

Mr. COBDEN: I assure the House that it is impossible for me to trespass long upon their notice, but I am anxious to say a few words before the close of this protracted debate. I have had the good or the ill fortune to listen to many debates upon this subject in this House, and although it has not been my fate to listen to this, at all events I have had the merit of perusing every word of it. On former occasions I have had to complain, that although the object and purpose of the Motion was to discuss the principle of the Corn Laws, yet that hon. Gentlemen always evaded the question, and tried to discuss every other rather than the particular question before the House; but however I may have had to complain of that on former occasions, I think it will be admitted that extraneous matter has been introduced into this debate by hon. Gentlemen opposite to a much greater extent than before. It appears to me, that one half of the debate has turned upon the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers, and nearly the whole of the other half upon the necessity of a dissolution and an appeal to the country. Now, though there may be ground, I will not say there may be just ground, for hon. Gentlemen below the gangway assailing the Ministers for the course they have pursued; yet the country, I assure them, will not sympathize with them in the quarrel with their leaders, nor will they be without some suspicion that that grievance has been dwelt upon to avoid a discussion of principle; for I wish you to bear in mind that, on former occasions, by similar means, you did try to avoid that discussion. In 1841 you denounced the leaders of the Whigs as furiously as you denounce the leaders of your own party now; and when I came into Parliament, in the spring of 1842, I must say that I myself and the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League were as much the objects of your vituperation as the Ministers are now. The country, therefore, will not sympathize with you; and, on the other hand, it will doubt whether or not you have introduced these personal topics because you cannot justify the Corn Law. Now, if hon. Gentlemen opposite have any fear that their present leaders contemplate, after the repeal of the Corn Laws, doing something else which they may think injurious to their party interests, I beg to assure them that they are taking the most effectual means of arming the present Ministers with the power of accomplishing something else, if they wish it; for the more they attack them, the more obloquy they load them with, the more will the country sympathize with them out of doors. Why, you are making the present Ministry the most popular men in the country. If the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury were to go into the manufacturing districts of the north, his journey would be one of continued triumph. The right hon. Home Secretary was not

personally very popular two or three years ago. It is a difficult thing for a Home Secretary in troublesome times to become popular; but the magnificent contribution the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) has given to our good cause, by his able speeches and authoritative statements of facts, has sunk deep into the mind of the country; these, and still more the martyrdom you are nightly inflicting upon him, have rendered him so popular, that I don't think we could parade any one in Manchester or Liverpool who would meet with a more cordial reception. I don't think you [addressing the protectionists] are pursuing a good party course. I think you are as badly off on the score of good judgment and tactics as ever you were. I will now, however, draw your attention to the second topic to which I have referred, and which is of still more importance. If I understand your position rightly it is this: you say, "We wish for an appeal to the country; if the country decide that free trade shall be the national policy, we will bow to that decision." I believe I am fairly interpreting your meaning. I tell you, then, in the first place, that if you are believers in the truth and justice of your principles, you are unworthy advocates of those principles if you will think of abandoning them on such grounds. If you believe in the truth of your principles, you should not bow to the decision of a temporary majority of this House. When I came into Parliament, in 1841, I met you with a majority of 91 in your favour. Did I then bow to that majority, and submit to the Corn Law? No; I felt as confident in the triumph of justice then as now. I said I would never cease my exertions till you abrogated that law. If you have confidence in the truth and justice of your principles, you should use the same language. You should say, "It is not one defeat that shall make us abandon those great principles which we consider essential to the welfare and prosperity of the great mass of the people. No; if we are thrown to the ground now, we will spring up with renewed determination and vigour." ["Yes."] You say "Yes, yes," to that sentiment; but you had already told me by your cheers that you did not intend to do anything of the kind; I am conscientiously of opinion that you are unbelievers in the doctrines you advocate. But I will assume that you can carry out your object —that you can force a dissolution; and to this point I wish particularly to draw your attention, and, what is of still more importance, the attention of persons in another place. We have had some pretty frank allusions, especially in the peroration of the speech of the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, to what is to be done in another place, where there is no representative with this measure of the middle classes —no merchant, no manufacturer, no spinner, no farmer. In that other place, however, what I now say on the subject of a dissolution may probably be read. You want a dissolution in order to ascertain the opinion of the country. Have you ever thought, or considered, or defined what the opinion of the country means? Do you think it means a numerical majority of this House? We shall have that to-night. You are not satisfied with that. You are preaching the democratic doctrine, that this question must be referred to the people. Now, I want to have well defined what you mean by public opinion. You will perhaps say, "We will abide by the decision of a numerical majority of this House returned at another general election," and you will consider that the decision of the country. Well, I totally disagree with all those who believe for a moment that you will obtain a numerical majority in this House in the event of a dissolution. I ought to know as much about the state of the representation of this country, and of the registration, as any man in the House. Probably no one has given so much attention to that question as I have done; and I distinctly deny that you have the slightest probability of gaining a numerical majority in this House, if a dissolution took place to-morrow. Now, I would not have said this three months ago. On the contrary, at a public meeting three months ago, I distinctly recognised the great probability of your having a numerical majority in the event of a dissolution. But your party is since broken up. Though you may still have a firm phalanx in Dorsetshire and Buckinghamshire, what has been the effect of the separation from you of the most authoritative and intelligent of your party upon the boroughs, and among the population of the north? I told you, three years ago, that the Conservatives of the towns of the north of England were not the followers of the Duke of Richmond. They were, almost to a man, the followers of that section of the Government represented by the First Lord of the Treasury and the right hon. Home Secretary. Every one ac-

quainted with the towns in the north of England will bear me out when I say that those Conservatives who follow the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) comprise at least four-fifths of the party; while the remainder may look up to the Duke of Richmond as their leader, and sympathize with the section below the gangway. That large portion of the Conservative party in the north of England has ever been in favour of free trade. The language they have used to free traders like myself has been this: "Sir R. Peel will do it at the proper time. We have confidence in him, and when the proper period arrives he will give us free trade." Then I say, that in this state of your party, I wholly deny the possibility of your gaining a majority. But I will assume, for the sake of argument, that, in the event of a dissolution of Parliament, you obtained a numerical majority. Let us see of what that majority and of what the minority opposed to you would consist. There are eighteen representatives in Parliament for this metropolis, and there are two Members for the metropolitan county. We have the whole twenty. They represent 110,000 electors; they represent a population of 2,000,000 of souls — the most intelligent, the most wealthy, the most orderly, and, notwithstanding my acquaintance with the business habits of those in the north of England, I must add, with respect to business and mechanical life, the hardest working people in England. Do those people express public opinion think you? Why, this metropolis assumed to itself, conturies ago, the power and privilege of closing its gates in the face of its Sovereign—a power which is still retained, and which is exercised on State occasions. This metropolis is now twenty times as populous, as wealthy, as important in the world's eye as it was then; and do you think it will be content that you count it as nothing in your estimate of public opinion? But turn elsewhere. What says the metropolis of Scotland, Edinburgh? Do you reckon on having a Member for that city to vote in the glorious majority which you anticipate? Turn to Dublin. Will you have a representative for that city with you? Go to Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and Liverpool; take every town containing 20,000 inhabitants, and I defy you to show that you can reckon on a single representative for any town in the kingdom which has such a population. I tell you that you have not with you now a town in Great Britain containing 20,000 inhabitant. [Hon. MEMBERS: Liverpool and Bristol.] No, no, no; you have neither Liverpool nor Bristol. That shows you have not weighed these matters as you are bound to weigh them. Don't be led away by the men who cheer and halloo there, like the school-boy whistling in the churchyard to keep up his courage. Examine these facts, for those who were formerly your leaders have weighed them already; and there is none among you deserving to be your leaders unless they have well considered these important matters. I repeat that you cannot reckon upon any town of 20,000 inhabitants sending up a representative to vote with the great majority you expect to obtain. True, you will have your pocket boroughs and your nomination counties. And I will say a word or two directly as to the county representation; but I now place before you broadly the situation in which you will find yourselves after a dissolution. I will assume that you have a majority, derived from pocket boroughs and nomination counties, of twenty or thirty members. But on this side you will see the representatives for London, for South Lancashire, for West Yorkshire, for North Cheshire, for North Lancashire, and the Members for all the large towns of England, Ireland, and Scotland; nay, not one Member will come from any town in Scotland to vote with you. Now what would then be your situation? Why, you would shrink aghast from the position in which you would find yourselves. There would be more defections from your ranks, pledged as you are—steeped to the chin in pledges. So much alarmed would you be at your position, that you would cross the floor to join us in larger numbers than you have ever yet done. I tell you there would be no safety for you without it. I say that the Members who came up under such circumstances, to attempt to maintain the Corn Laws, from your Ripons and Stamfords, Woodstocks and Marlboroughs, would hold those opinions only till they found it was determined by public opinion to repeal them. They could not hold them one week longer; for if the country found that they would not give way to moral force, they might think it requisite to place them in another Schedule A. Now, I have told you what, in my opinion, constitutes public opinion. Had there been such an amount of public opinion as now exists in favour of the repeal of the

Corn Laws, in support of the Pretender in 1745, the dynasty of the Stuarts would now have occupied the Throne of these realms. That amount of public opinion is sufficient to change the Constitution of this country—to alter your forms of Government—to do anything, in short, that public opinion is determined to effect. But you may probably tell me that, though we have the electors of the great constituencies I have mentioned in our favour, the great mass of the people are not with us. That is a rather democratic sentiment. You never heard me quote the superior judgment of the working classes in any deliberations in this assembly. You never heard me cant about the superior claims of the working classes to arbitrate on this great question. But you say the mass of the people are not with us. What evidence is there that this is the case? Will you shut your eyes to proofs? Will you go blindfold against a stone wall? You say the petitions presented to this House have not been honestly signed. I cannot disprove that assertion. It must go for what it is worth. But we have ten times as many signatures to our petitions for Corn Law repeal as you have to your protection petitions. You may assume that the signatures to those petitions are fictitious. Do so if you please. I will give you another test. I will challenge you to the old Saxon mode of ascertaining what are the opinions of the country by calling public meetings. Now, if you really entertain democratic opinions, this is the way in which to elevate the working man to an equality with his master; ay, to an equality with the Peer of the realm — bringing them out into public assemblies, where every man has an equal vote—assemblies which make laws for the conduct of their own proceedings, and elect their own chairman, Call your public meetings to support the Corn Laws. I challenge you to call one anywhere. Why, it is not in the manufacturing districts alone that meetings have been held since the 1st of November last. Public meetings, convened by the authorities, have been held in every large town. Meetings not confined to a particular class, or consisting of men pledged to particular opinions, but convened to determine, ay or no, whether the people should petition for free trade or not. These meetings have not been confined to the manufacturing districts alone; they have been held at Exeter, Brighton, and Oxford; and the opinion of the people was as unanimous at those places as at Bolton, Stockport, and Manchester. Now, cannot you call a public meeting, and test the opinions of the people? Would not one meeting, at all events, be something like a proof that you are practical men, and not disposed to be misled by the chimeras of those hot-headed, half-witted people who try to deceive you? I have seen some of your notices calling protection meetings. One was forwarded to me from Epworth, in Lincolnshire, by a gentleman who complained that the notice was so framed that protectionists only could attend, and that no amendment could be proposed. Why, in the purely agricultural district of Haddingtonshire, in the centre of the Lothians, a protection meeting was called about six weeks ago. All the neighbouring nobility and landed proprietors attended; they talked of the British Lion, and of the nation being with them. Soon after, another meeting was held, when it was proposed to petition for the repeal of the Corn Laws. The protectionists fled from the room, the largest room in the place; but it was quite full without them, and resolutions in favour of repeal were adopted. Was this evidence of public opinion? [An hon. Member: No.] Was it not? Then what will teach you what public opinion is? Must you be tossed in a blanket? Must you be swept out of this House into the Thames? What must be done to convince you that the feeling of the nation is not with you? You will be abandoned to fatuity and destruction, if you are left to persons who have so little mercy upon you as to delude you on this question. I said that I would refer to the county representation. You are pluming yourselves on the result of recent county elections, and you are reckoning, no doubt, on the attainment of great strength from your purely agricultural counties in the event of a dissolution; but I beg to remind hon. Gentlemen that the county representation, under the 50*l.* tenant-at-will clause of the Reform Act, is not the old county representation. We never heard, twenty years ago, of requisitions being got up to candidates by tenant-farmers. The requisitions were then got up by freeholders. You introduced into the Reform Act, by a great mistake on the part of those who then had the power to have prevented it, a clause innovating on the old constitutional custom, and giving tenants-at-will a vote for counties. Do you mean to tell me that the votes of these tenants-at-will are an evidence of public opinion?

We heard a definition of tenant-at-will votes last night, which, with the permission of the House, I will read. The hon. Member for Dorsetshire—and I congratulate the free traders on his advent here—told us with great *naïveté*—

"He (Mr. Seymer), with his hon. Colleague, came forward at the recent election for Dorset, in consequence of a requisition signed by the great body of the tenant-farmers. Three or four of the largest properties in the county were in the hands of free traders, and naturally the tenants on those estates held back, and refused to sign the requisition till they knew what were the wishes of their landlords; for it was notorious that English tenants generally wished to consult the feelings of their landlords. He (Mr. Seymer) did not think tenants to blame for that. Knowing that their landlords were free traders, the tenantries in question made inquiry, previous to signing, whether those landlords would object to their taking the course their consciences dictated; the landowners, very much to their credit, said, that this being a farmer's question, they would not interfere, and then, almost without exception, the farmers on those properties signed the requisition."

Yes, yes; it is all very well for those who get the consent of their landlords to vote; but recollect what the hon. Gentleman says at the commencement of his remarks. He tells us that he and his Colleague were put in nomination in consequence of a requisition signed by tenant-farmers—that is, in consequence of a requisition got up by command of the landlords, and signed by the farmers. Now, I put it to you candidly—is it not an understood etiquette in counties, that one proprietor who is a candidate should not canvass the tenants on the estate of another till he has obtained the sanction of the owner? ["No."] Am I to understand that the protectionist Gentlemen in a body below the gangway contradict me when I state as a point of etiquette in counties, one proprietor, who is a candidate, does not think it proper to canvass the tenantry on the estate of another proprietor, without first intimating to the landowner his intention and desire to do so? ["No."] Well, there are only two or three faint noes. I think the ayes have it. But, however, this point at all events is admitted, that, as a rule, farmers vote with the landlords; that the vote goes with the land: nobody denies that the farm carries the vote. What right, then, have you to call this the opinion of the farmer? You cannot have it both ways. It cannot be both the opinion of the landlord and the opinion of the tenants. What becomes, then, of all those interesting romances in which the Duke of Richmond has indulged in public, about the bold, independent, and gallant yeomanry of the country? Why, these are the men who have not the right of using their suffrages. It is your own statement. This country certainly will not be governed by a combination of landlords and tenants. Probably you are not aware on what a very narrow basis this power of yours rests. But I can give you some information on the subject. There are about 150,000 tenants who form the basis of your political power, and who are distributed throughout the counties of this country. Well, let it come to the worst; carry on the opposition to this measure for three years more; yet there is a plan in operation much maligned by some hon. Gentlemen opposite, and still more maligned in another place, but which, the more the shoe pinches, and the more you wince at it, the more we like it out of doors. Now, I say, we have confronted this difficulty, and are prepared to meet it. We are calling into exercise the true old English forms of the Constitution, of five centuries antiquity, and we intend that the ancient 40*s.* freehold franchise shall countervail this innovation of yours in the Reform Bill. You think that there is something revolutionary in this. Why, you are the innovators and the revolutionists who introduced this new franchise into the Reform Bill. But I believe that it is perfectly understood by the longest heads among your party that we have a power out of doors to meet this difficulty. You should bear in mind that less one-half of the money invested in the savings banks, laid out at better interest in the purchase of freeholds, would give qualifications to more persons than your 150,000 tenant-farmers. But you say that the League is purchasing votes, and giving away the franchise. No, no; we are not quite so rich as that; but be assured that if you prolong the contest for three or four years—which you cannot do—if, however, it comes to the worst, we have the means in our power to meet the difficulty, and are prepared to use them. Money has been subscribed to prepare our organization in every county, and we are prepared to meet the difficulty and to overcome it. You may think that there is something repulsive to your notions of supremacy in all this. I see a very great advantage in it, even if the Corn Laws were repealed to-morrow. I think that you cannot too soon widen the basis of our county representation. I say, with respect to a man, whether he be a small shopkeeper or a mechanic, who by his prudence has saved

50*l.* or 100*l.*, and is willing to lay it out in the purchase of a cottage or land bringing in 40*s.* a year as a freehold—I say that it is to that man of all others that I would wish to intrust the franchise. Let it be understood that all this extraneous matter is not of my introducing; for your debate has turned on the question of dissolution. No one can complain of my having, on this question, been guilty of introducing irrelevant matter. I generally keep close to the argument; but you have chosen to say now that you will not settle the question by argument, and by an appeal to facts and reason in this House; that you will have nothing to do with this House, but that you will go to the country. Now, I have given you some idea of what is your prospect in the country. I do not ask you to take my opinion for it; but as mischief may be averted from yourselves, more from another place to which allusion has been made than from others, I do ask you to take these facts home, to study them for yourselves, to look over the registry, to count the population of the towns, and then to come down and say whether you think the public opinion of the country is with you or against you. So much of the discussion has turned on this extraneous question, and what little argument has been addressed to the merits of the case has been so abundantly answered by other persons, that it would be impertinent in me to trespass at too great length on the time of the House. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, I will tell you what my thoughts were as I sat at home patiently reading these debates. As I read speech after speech, and saw the old protection fallacies which I had knocked on the head seven years ago reappearing afresh, my thought was, what fun these debates will afford to the men in fustian jackets. All these fallacies are perfectly transparent to these men, and they would laugh at you for putting them forward. Dependence on foreigners! Who in the world could have supposed that that long-buried ghost would come again to light? Drain of gold! Wages rising and falling with the price of bread! Throwing land out of cultivation, and bringing corn here at 25*s.* per quarter! You forget that the great mass of the people now take a very different view on these questions from what you do. They formerly, seven years ago, did give in, to a certain extent, to your reiterated assertions that wages rise and fall with the price of bread. You had a very fair claptrap against us (as we happened to be master manufacturers) in saying that we wanted to reduce wages. But the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, and the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary, are not suspected by the English people of having such motives on these questions. The English people have no disinclination to defer to high authorities on these matters. They assume that men high in office have access to accurate information; and they generally suppose that those men have no sinister motive for deceiving the great body of the people on a question like the present. You see, I do not underrate the importance of your leaders having declared in favour of free trade. On the contrary, I avow that that has caused the greatest possible accession to the ranks of the free traders. Well, then, the working classes, not believing that wages rise and fall with the price of bread, when you tell them that they are to have corn at 25*s.* a quarter, instead of being frightened, are rubbing their hands with satisfaction. They are not frightened at the visions which you present to their eyes of a big loaf, seeing that they expect to get more money, and bread at half the price. And then the danger of having your land thrown out of cultivation! Why, what would the men in smockfrocks in the south of England say to that? They would say, "We shall get our land for potato ground at a halfpenny a lug, instead of paying threepence or fourpence for it." These fallacies have all been disposed of; and if you lived more in the world, more in contact with public opinion, and less within that charmed circle which you think the world, but which is really nothing but a clique—if you gave way less to the excitement of clubs, less to the buoyancy which arises from talking to each other as to the effect of some smart speech in which a Minister has been assailed, you would see that it was mere child's play to attempt to baulk the intelligence of the country on this great question, and you would not have talked as you have talked for the last eleven days. Now, with respect to the farmers, I will not deny that you have a large portion of the farmers clinging to their landlords on this question. They have been talked to and frightened by their landlords, as children by their nurses, and they dread some hideous prospect or some old bogie, ready to start up before their eyes. They do not know what is to happen; but they have not strict and im-

plicit faith in you. They are afraid lest anything should happen to render them unable to make terms with the landlords in the matter of rent; or, otherwise, they are perfectly easy and willing to receive free trade to-morrow. They are afraid of how the adjustment might be conducted; and the question, therefore, I have no hesitation in saying, is a landlord's question. On this subject the farmers have had some hints given them in the following paragraph, which appeared some time ago in the *Standard* newspaper:—

"Under what head then is the farmer to look for relief? Under the head rent. The landlord must reduce rent; but the farmer knows, by rather bitter experience, the process by which this reduction must be effected. He must be first himself rendered unable to pay rent, and then the landlord will yield, and not before."

This is the character given by the *Standard* newspaper of the landlords, and in this consists the great difficulty with the farmers. I do not think that the farmers generally believe all that you have told them. I believe that farms let as high now as ever they did. There is something remarkable in this. Since the right hon. Baronet has proposed this measure, I have directed my attention to this point, because I conceive that it solves much of our difficulty. I have inquired of land agents, land proprietors, lawyers, &c., as to whether land has suffered any depreciation in value in consequence of the proposition on this subject made by the Government? Now, it is remarkable, but land seems to be the only commodity not injuriously affected by the proposed measures of the Government—that, though French silks are for the moment rendered almost unsaleable, and though the proposed change has produced almost a paralysis in every trade touched, yet land is letting and selling for higher prices than ever. Now, I will give you an example. I will mention a case, and I am at liberty to mention the name. The hon. Member for Somerset will corroborate what I am going to state. Mr. Gordon, a near neighbour of that hon. Member, has made the tenants upon sixty of his farms an offer that he would take their land off their hands on equitable terms at Ladyday; yesterday was the last day for giving notice of accepting his offer, and not one farmer proposed to do so. I think it is not very complimentary to the hon. Member for Somerset. Mr. Gordon is a near neighbour of his; and his tenants, of course, have had the privilege of hearing those eloquent addresses which the hon. Member has made in Somerset, wherein he has told them that land will not be worth cultivation at all, or, at least, that there will be such an avalanche of corn from the Continent and from America as will quite supersede home cultivation; and yet these farmers seem to have so little alarm that they are willing to hold their farms at their present rents. Let me read you, too, the account that is given me by a gentleman in the City, an eminent solicitor, whom I have known for some years, and who is largely interested in landed property:—

"I have for many years been connected with the management of landed property, and with the purchase and letting of estates in several different counties, and am at this time negotiating for the renewal of leases and letting of lands in Bedfordshire, Herts, and Essex. In the latter county the tenant who has occupied a farm of 500 acres for fourteen years under a lease, and who has always spoken of his rent as somewhat high, and of his own farming as the best in his own neighbourhood, has now offered a considerable increase of rent (15 per cent) for a new lease of fourteen years, and to covenant to underdrain two-thirds of the farm, the landlord finding draining tiles, now acknowledging that the cultivation may be greatly improved, so as to meet the increase of rent. The farmer has another occupation, and is not, therefore, under any fear of being without a farm. He is a protectionist in words, and a supporter of Sir John Tyrrell. Under the rumour that this farm might be given up, there were eight or ten most respectable applicants for it. In Hertfordshire I am at this moment renewing leases upon two large farms, both with the offer of increased rents, and with covenants for greatly improved cultivation, particularly as to underdraining. In Bedfordshire upon two moderate-sized farms the same has been the result; and on the application for one of them, which the farmer is quitting in consequence of age and infirmity, the following conversation took place on the application to me by an intelligent farmer for the farm: 'I understand, Sir, that you have the letting of Mr. L.'s farm, as he is quitting.—I have. I should like to have the offer of it; my name is ——, and I can refer you to the clergyman of my parish, and to several gentlemen, for my character and responsibility. You are, I presume, a farmer?—Yes, Sir; I have one farm, and I should like another to extend my occupation, as I have sufficient capital. You know the farm, I presume, and the rent which the present tenant pays.—Yes, Sir, I know the farm and the rent; and as we are no longer to have any protection, and the Corn Laws must now be repealed, I hope you will consider that point in the rent. Pray, as you say that the Corn Laws will be repealed, what, in your judgment, will be the effect?—Why, Sir, the first will be the waking up of thousands of farmers who have hitherto been asleep; and we must look to increased efforts and increased production. With respect to rent, I must have a small increase, and I must require covenants for better cultivation, more especially as to underdraining, which must be done very extensively.—Sir, my intention is, if I have the farm, to underdrain the whole of it,

being allowed tiles. Well, as you are a man of observation, and acquainted with different districts in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Herts, tell me whether I am right (so far as your observation goes) in saying that under improved cultivation one third more corn can be grown, and the sample much better?—I have no doubt that you are right. Then, if I am right, what have you to fear from the abolition of the Corn Laws?—Nothing at all, Sir.' This person has hired the farm at increased rent, and undertaken to underdrain the whole, if required by the landlord so to do."

Now, hon. Gentleman must, of course, be better able than I can be to judge from their own experience whether this be a fair statement of the case or not; but I would put it to them, are any of them prepared to sell their own estates for one farthing less now than they were twelve months ago? But if farmers will take the land at the same rent, and if you will not take less than thirty years' purchase now upon the present rental, where are the proofs that you are in earnest in all that you predict as the consequences of the repeal of the Corn Laws? Nay, this is a proof that there has been a system of mutual self-delusion, or mutual deception between you and the farmers. You have preached doctrines which the farmers have affected to believe, but which neither of you has believed at heart. Either you have been doing this jointly—doing it that you might practise upon the credulity of your countrymen, or else you are now pursuing a most unworthy and inconsistent course; because after telling the farmers at your protection meetings that wheat is to be sold at 30*s.* or 35*s.* a quarter, and that they cannot carry on their business in competition with the Russians and the Poles, even if they have their land rent free, with what fairness or consistency can you now let your land to farmers at the existing rents? But the truth is, that you know—that the country knows—that there never was a more monstrous delusion than to suppose that that which goes to increase the trade of the country and to extend its manufactures and commerce—that which adds to our wealth, increases our population, enlarges the number of your customers, and diminishes your burdens by multiplying the shoulders that are to bear them, and giving them increased strength to bear them, can possibly tend to diminish the value of land. You may affect the value of silks—you may affect the value of cottons or woollens; transitory changes of fashion may do that—changes of taste; but there is a taste for land inherent in human kind, and especially is it the desire of Englishmen to possess land; and, therefore, while you have a monopoly of that article which our very instincts lead us to desire to possess, if you see any process going on by which our commerce and our numbers are increased, it is impossible to suppose that it can have the effect of diminishing the value of the article that is in your hands. What, then, is the good of this "protection?" Why, the country have come to regard it, as they regard witchcraft, as a mere sound and a delusion. They no more regard your precautions against free trade, than they regard the horse-shoes that are nailed over the stables to keep the witches away from the horses. They do not believe in protection—they have no fear of free trade—and they are laughing to scorn all the arguments by which you are trying to frighten them. How can protection, think you, add to the wealth of a country? Can you, by legislation, add one farthing to the wealth of a country? You may, by legislation, in one evening destroy the fruits and accumulations of a century of labour; but I defy you to show me how, by the legislation of this House, you can add one farthing to the wealth of this country. That springs from the industry and intelligence of the people of the country. You cannot guide that intelligence; you cannot do better than leave industry to its own instincts. If you attempt by legislation to give any direction to trade and industry, it is a thousand to one that you are doing wrong; and if you happen to be right, it is a work of supererogation; for the parties for whom you legislate would go right without you, and better than with you. Then, if this be true, why should there be any difference of opinion between us? Hon. Gentlemen may think that I have spoken hardly to them on this occasion; but I want to see them come to a better conclusion on this question. I believe, if they will look the thing in the face, and divest themselves of that crust of prejudice which oppresses them, we shall all be better friends about it. There are but two things that can prevent it; one is, their believing that they have a sinister interest in this question, and therefore not looking into it; and the other is, an incapacity for understanding political economy. I know that there are many heads which cannot comprehend and master a proposition in political economy. I believe that study is the highest exercise of the human mind, and that the exact sciences require by no means so hard

an effort. But, barring these two accidents — want of capacity, and having a sinister interest—I defy any man to look into this question honestly, and come to any other than one conclusion. Then why should we not concur on this matter? Why should there be any triumph for either? I want no triumph. Come down to us, and let us hold a free-trade meeting in our hall at Manchester; come to us now, protectionists, and let us see whether we cannot do something better for our common country than carrying on this strife of parties. Let us once for all recognise this principle, that we must not tax one another for the benefit of one another. Now, I am going to read you an authority that will astonish you. I am going to read you an extract from a speech of the Duke of Wellington, in the House of Lords, on the 17th of April, 1832. It is his opinion on taxation :—

> "He thought taxes were imposed only for the service of the State. If they were necessary for the service of the State, in God's name let them be paid; but if they were not necessary, they ought not to be paid, and the Legislature ought not to impose them."

Now there, that noble Duke, without having had time to study Adam Smith or Ricardo, by that native sagacity which is characteristic of his mind, came at once to the marrow of this question. We must not tax one another for the benefit of one another. Oh, then, divest the future Prime Minister of this country of that odious task of having to reconcile rival interests; divest the office, if ever you would have a sagacious man in power as Prime Minister, of the responsibility of having to find food for the people! May you never find a Prime Minister again to undertake that awful responsibility! It belongs to God and to nature—to those laws of trade which Burke says are the laws of God and of nature—it belongs to them, and to them only, to regulate the supply of food, and of every commodity for the use of mankind. When you shall have seen in three years that the abolition of these laws is inevitable, you will be obliged then to meet the wishes of the farmer, and dissolve the League, as in good faith it will be dissolved. I say that when you find it to be inevitable, as inevitable it is, you will come forward and join with the free traders; for if you do not, you will have the farmers coming forward and agitating in conjunction with the League. You are in a position to gain honour in future; you are in a position, especially the young Members among you who have the capacity to learn the truth of this question, they are in a position to gain honour in this struggle; but as you are going on at present your position is a false one, you are in the wrong groove, and are every day more and more diverging from the right point. It may be material for you to get right notions of political economy; questions of that kind will form a great part of the world's legislation for a long time to come. We are on the eve of great changes. Put yourselves in a position to be able to help in the work, and so gather honour and fame where they are to be gained—not the privileged aristocracy, I don't mean that, but the aristocracy of improvement and civilization. We have set an example to the world in all ages; we have given them the representative system. Why, the very rules and regulations of this House have been taken as the model for every representative assembly throughout the whole civilized world; and having besides given them the example of a free press, of civil and religious liberty, and of every institution that belongs to freedom and civilization, we are now about to offer a still greater example; we are going to set the example of making industry free—to set the example of giving the whole world every advantage in every clime, and latitude, and production; relying ourselves on the freedom of our industry. Yes, we are going to teach the world that other lesson. Don't think there is anything selfish in this, or anything at all discordant with Christian principles. I can prove that we advocate nothing but what is agreeable to the highest behests of Christianity. To buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. What is the meaning of the maxim? It means that you take the article which you have in the greatest abundance, and obtain from others that of which they have the most to spare, so giving to mankind the means of enjoying the fullest abundance of every earthly good, and in doing so carrying out to the fullest extent the Christian doctrine of "doing to all men as ye would they should do unto you."

Mr. SPOONER said, that the hon. Member for Stockport began his address by stating that in all former Corn Law debates, much extraneous matter had been introduceed; but that there had been more in this than in any former one. It appeared, however, that he was determined to follow the example, for he (Mr. Spooner)

would defy any one who had entered the House whilst the hon. Member was speaking, to know the question upon which he was addressing the House. They might have thought that it was the Reform Bill, or the 50*l.* tenant-at-will clause which was under consideration; but he (Mr. Spooner) contended that the farmer renting to the amount of 50*l.* per annum was as well qualified as the 10*l.* householder. He would ask whether it was not natural that a tenant should consult the opinions of a kind landlord, and give him credit for being guided by just reasons? Was not the same influence used in a much more forcible way by the manufacturer? Whatever his station in society, be it landlord or master manufacturer, the man who did his duty, who felt for the interests of the voter, and wished to promote his welfare, would have the influence which he ought to have; and it would be the greatest curse upon this country if such influence were in any way infringed upon. The hon. Member for Stockport went on to say, that the landed interest were ignorant of their position, and if an appeal were to be made to the country they would not have a majority in that House. He further told them that they had no confidence in their principles, and that they would be ready to change them when their numerical position was altered. He (Mr. Spooner) could however say, that if a new election should issue in a majority in favour of the principles of free trade, the opposers of free trade would still adhere to their opinions. But they felt that the present Parliament was especially called to decide the question of protection or no protection. Indeed, her Majesty, at that crisis, in Her Speech from the Throne, said, that she had appealed to the nation to ascertain the sense of Her people upon that very question. Since then, the great leader of the Protectionists and his Cabinet had changed their opinions, and they necessarily carried with them a considerable number, which changed the position of the party in that House; but before the line of conduct was altered which they were sent there to maintain, it should be ascertained whether the change was confined to the Minister and part of his adherents, or whether the country sympathized in that change. It was not his intention to enter at length into the discussion, as the House had unequivocally declared its intention to divide that night; and he knew other hon. Members wished to speak on the question. He would only therefore shortly express the reasons which would induce him to give his vote in favour of the Amendment which had been proposed by the hon. Member for Bristol. And in the first place, he would refer to the charges made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), namely, that hon. Members who agreed to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, were bound to go into Committee; and further, that those who voted for the Amendment wished to stifle inquiry. Had the right hon. Baronet argued it as a Motion for inquiry? So far from it, he had put it on the right footing, that if they went into Committee, it would be for the purpose of considering resolutions founded upon the very principles that protection was not good in itself, nor required by the circumstances of the country. From that principle he (Mr. Spooner) completely dissented. Had the right hon. Baronet proposed to the House to go into Committee to consider the Corn Laws with a view to their modification, he (Mr. Spooner) would have given the Motion his decided support. He had never supported the Corn Laws. He had never given a vote for them. He had always been of opinion that the sliding-scale system was indefensible, and that a fixed duty was the only system that could be maintained by rational argument. But it was absurd to say, when taxes were imposed upon industry for State purposes, that they should allow foreign produce to come into the market without contributing its share to those taxes. The burden of taxation fell eventually upon the labour of the country, and that labour ought to be protected from untaxed foreign labour. The hon. Member for Stockfort had advised the younger Members of that House to study Adam Smith. He (Mr. Spooner) had attentively studied that author, and he had studied a work of the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Russell), in which that noble Lord had proved himself a disciple of Adam Smith. He was going to quote a passage—[" Oh, oh!" *from the Ministerial benches.*] The hon. Members need not be afraid of what he was going to quote. It was not *Hansard* that he held in his hand—*Hansard* was a sealed book now—*Hansard* was never more to be referred to as a work of authority, a political guide, or a public tutor. It contained now only inconvenient records of pledges broken, promises unfulfilled, expectations blighted, hopes destroyed. It was to be treated now as a counsellor treated his brief when the trial

was over; it had served its turn, a cause had been gained by the use of it, and now it was flung aside; and the pleader, whose eloquence it had inspired, was prepared to take, nay, had already taken another brief from the other side, to plead with equal eloquence the adverse cause. No! he was not going to quote *Hansard.* The work he held in his hand was the work of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), which would be handed down to posterity as containing the opinions of a statesman and an author. He had said, in his work on the British Constitution, that nations are subject to great vicissitudes:—

"We naturally look to those whose study is the wealth of nations, for a remedy; but they are occupied only with general truths. The transition from one state of employment to another does not seem to occupy their thoughts. They keep their eyes fixed on the end, and do not afford us any defence against the evils to be met with on their way. Whatever your complaint is, they repeat their abstract dogma, and a nation may be ruined before it can hope to have the benefit of their precepts. Adam Smith was, to a great degree, free from this error. In laying down the principle of free trade, he says, 'There are two cases when it may be advantageous to lay some burden upon foreign for the encouragement of domestic industry. First, when some particular sort of industry is necessary for the defence of the country; secondly, when some tax is imposed at home upon the produce of domestic industry, it may be sometimes a matter of deliberation how far and in what manner it is proper to restore the free importation of foreign goods, when particular manufactures, by means of high duties or prohibitions, have been so far extended as to employ a great multitude of hands. Humanity may in this case require that the freedom of trade should be restored only by slow gradations, and with a good deal of reserve and circumspection.' These are wise restrictions; but they tend so much to limit the action of political economy, that many of its modern professors seem to throw them entirely aside. If any one objects to their sweeping laws, that numbers will be thrown out of employment, they wonder at the ignorance which does not know that if one employment is lost, another and a better will be found; yet, in spite of this clamour, a temperate man knows that the process of converting silk weavers into blacksmiths, or farmers into cotton spinners, is one of pain and suffering. A want of attention to the distinctions and modifications required by the divisions of the world into many independent nations is apparent. Were there no such thing as war—no such thing as commercial disputes—no such thing as a national debt—it might be easy for the Ministers of different communities to come to an understanding to regulate the world according to the rules of commercial liberty; but the existing fact is—that every nation is obliged to guard its independence with the utmost jealousy; to avoid, with the greatest care, putting itself under the control of any other Power; and to check its industry by taxes, which are absolutely necessary for the preservation of its separate existence."

The noble Lord compares Governments fettered with the restraints of the old mercantile system, and encouragements not wisely given, to a gouty patient whom some visionary physician ordered to leave off all stimulants, and to take to a diet of vegetables and water. A more experienced physician would recommend a system more wholesome and natural than the one hitherto pursued, yet one adapted to the artificial wants which an inveterate habit had created. Now these were the views which the hon. Member for Stockport had treated with so much derision. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton had last night produced some figures to show that there might be a very considerable increase in the importation of foreign corn, and at the same time a considerable increase of our bullion; but, unfortunately for him, he was not borne out by facts. The hon. Gentleman's argument was that of four years of import, namely, from 1838 to 1842; in the first year, the gold in the Bank was reduced from nine to two millions; in the second it continued depressed; in the third it began to rise; and in the fourth it came again to its original point. By admitting that in the first year the effect was an exportation of bullion, the hon. Member admitted all for which he (Mr. Spooner) contended, namely, that the immediate effect of a free importation of corn would be an immediate exportation of bullion, greatly affecting the circulation of the country, thus producing the most disastrous consequences. But there were other causes in the four years to which the hon. Gentleman had referred, besides importation of corn creating those fluctuations in the bullion. ["Divide, divide."] He valued too highly the good opinion of the House to endanger the loss of it by attempting to intrude himself on their notice against their will and without their consent; and as he perceived they were not prepared to hear him further, he would, with perfect good humour, resume his seat, and reserve what he had to say for a more favourable opportunity.

Mr. BORTHWICK said: I can assure hon. Gentlemen I have no choice in this matter; I am under the necessity of voting not silently, but with a very brief explanation of the grounds of my vote; and I put it to the House whether they will not hear me. If I had had the good fortune to obtain a hearing at an earlier hour, I might have taken the liberty of making a few remarks on the able speech of the hon. Member for Winchester; but

I will waive that advantage, merely answering, as I pass, the question which he has put, whether the country could be governed by a Ministry with the Duke of Richmond at its head? Sir, we sit here as the public counsellors of Her Majesty, and it is not our duty to answer the hon. Gentleman whether the country could be governed by any particular Ministry. It is our duty to answer the right hon. Baronet, and tell him whether, in the opinion of this House, and of the country, by whom this House was elected, the measure which he proposes is in itself right, or in itself wrong. The choice of her Ministers belongs to Her Majesty alone. I could not have believed, if I had not heard it, that, one after one, Gentlemen of the acknowledged ability of the hon. Member for Stockport and of those who now sit on the Treasury bench, would, upon a question so grave as this, which now agitates the House and the country, have offered arguments so contradictory of each other. Yet so it is. Men, the most practised in debate, the most accomplished in argument, have successively poured each into his speech so many contending elements that, like a well-conducted experiment in chemistry, it has passed off in the effervescence of its own brilliancy, leaving nothing behind but the crude though comfortable residuum of a vote in favour of the Bill. Although, Sir, my feelings and opinions upon this great question are, like the opinions and feelings of many hon. Gentlemen who have preceded me, at direct and irreconcilable variance, yet I cannot persuade myself to attempt the expression of both—to record a vote in favour of my inclination, and to pronounce a speech in conformity with my conviction. I must be contented to follow the antiquated but equitable course of bestowing my vote where I inflict my speech; and, whatever may be my respect for the distinguished examples which, in this debate, have sanctioned the opposite practice—however surely my avowal may incur the reproach of a strong prejudice and a feeble understanding—I must frankly admit the great probability that I shall continue of one mind, at least until I resume my seat. This I am aware is unfashionable, and, in sooth, I do not know how to atone for it. I can lay no claim to magnanimity for opinions changed, principles discarded, pledges broken, or friends betrayed. Such sacrifices I have none to offer at the shrine of a new policy or a dominant power. I stand here, Sir, having altered no opinions. In 1841, I voted against the noble Lord the Member for London, and supported the right hon. Baronet, whom I then assisted in his efforts to displace him from power. I stand here with my opinions unchanged from that time; and I believe that my constituents, if I had changed those opinions, would have had a just right to have demanded of me an opportunity of constitutionally endeavouring to be represented in this House in a manner consistent with their expressed opinions and wishes. The right hon. Gentlemen who occupy the Treasury bench have failed to convince me that the principles upon which they assumed, and upon which they have hitherto exercised, their high functions, are false and dangerous; or that we, in helping them to power and maintaining them in office, were outraging the obligations of patriotism, and violating the dictates of common sense. I will go further, and confess that if they had succeeded in establishing all this—if I could be brought to believe it—wherever for the future my confidence might be placed, it could neither be in the soundness of their wisdom, nor in the sanity of my own judgment. But, Sir, the question before us is in itself so important, in its extent so vast, in its issues so multiform and momentous; it is, besides, propounded to our consideration under circumstances so strange, and we stand towards it in relations so novel and extraordinary, that I know not how to over-estimate the awful responsibility attaching to every vote which shall contribute to its decision. It is not, as the right hon. the Secretary at War has affirmed, the relaxation merely, or removal, of a fiscal impost, nor are its consequences, as others have maintained, limited to any one class of Her Majesty's subjects. It has been more justly defined by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Administration, as embracing "two points, each of great importance: the manner in which a great party ought to be conducted; and the principles upon which the commercial policy of a great Empire shall for the future be governed." The scheme, therefore, Sir, proposes the adoption of a commercial system, new to the practice, and, as I think, opposed to the polity, of this great Empire. It is, in itself, avowedly, a great commercial—in its results, I firmly believe, a great social and political revolution. This is to be proved. I presume, then, to take the measure, and the discussion upon it, as pre-

sented to the House—not by the right hon. Secretary at War, who makes it a mere question of fiscal import, nor by the right hon. the Vice President of the Board of Trade, who contends that it is a step onwards in the same path in which we have been constantly proceeding, but by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Administration, who fully admits its magnitude, distinctly foresees its results, and gallantly affronts its difficulties and its dangers. Two points, says the right hon. Baronet, are involved in this inquiry: "the manner of conducting a great political party; and the principles upon which the commercial policy of a great Empire shall for the future be governed." Of the former, and, as he says, less considerable of these, the right hon. Gentleman favoured the House with no definition. He disposed of the subject by declaring, that the measures now before us are, "for mere party purposes, the very worst that could be devised." Now, I own I cannot dismiss this part of the question so summarily. "Mere party purposes" is a somewhat uncertain — I had almost said, invidious—phrase. It may mean the sinister objects of faction, seeking only to reach or to retain power, or it may describe the high aims of true patriotism labouring to achieve the amelioration of mankind. In the former sense, the "worst possible measures for party purposes" would probably be the very best measures for the purposes of the country. In the latter, bad measures for a party, must likewise be measures injurious to the commonwealth. In which meaning does the right hon. Gentleman speak? If in the latter, then the scheme which hurts his party, must wound his country too; and if in the former, then is the mighty Conservative phalanx which he has formed and led—to form and lead which he has declared to be the great object of his political life—no better than a miserable faction; if able, degraded by selfishness; if honest, by ignorance and incapacity. But is this so? I think otherwise. I think the country is of another and an opposite opinion. I do not believe that the people of England have forgotten, or that posterity will cease to remember, the high and important services of the right hon. Gentleman in this behalf. It would ill become me, Sir, humble as I am, to speak on this matter words of bitterness or reproach. Earnestly, God knows, however humbly, and as one of many, to assist him in his great work, I have spent the best—I trust in heaven, the most anxious—years of my life. My confidence not only in his consummate administrative ability and sound financial wisdom, but in his general policy, remained undiminished until I heard these measures announced by his own lips. It has been said of Bonaparte that he could never have been conquered but by himself. I can say for myself, and I think I may say for others, infinitely more important than I can ever be, that no combinations of adverse factions—no efforts of party strategy—nothing, in short, but his own, I must say, somewhat abrupt direction, to stand out of his way, and allow the helm to traverse, could have shaken our faith in his leadership—much less scattered our forces from his defence. Yet we wished not to impede the action of the rudder—we had firm confidence in his skill to steer. We never required the vessel to be guided in 1846 by observations taken in 1842. We knew that as we made way onward the aspect of the heavens must change, and the landmarks must appear in altered relation to the ship. All this we knew; and we trusted our pilot, until he himself told us here on deck, that in clear weather, and with fair wind, he was determined to turn the vessel back upon her course, and, instead of steering as he had promised for the smooth harbour of protected industry, we were to sail into the dark, troubled, and untried waters of free trade. I have said, Sir, that I cannot presume to use language of reproach. I know that if the right hon. Gentleman is in an extraordinary position, he has lived through extraordinary times. He has had to contend—I do not speak of this question—with unexampled difficulties. The thirty years of which we have heard so much in this debate, date from the termination of that great European struggle which had conquered the form, but not eradicated the poison, of the earlier revolution in France. It is now thirty years since the thunders of Napoleon's wars have been hushed, and since Europe has been, as men say, at peace. Yet what a peace? Stillness indeed; but not the stillness of calm and healthful repose. Everywhere, on the contrary, we have seen uneasy and convulsive movements—denoting the presence of a feverish dream—the pressure on the seat of life, of some strange and terrible disease. During this ghastly peace, the spirit of war, scarcely disguised, has been busy in its mission. Thrones the most stable have been overturned. Dynasties the most an-

cient have been removed. Systems and institutions the most surely established and venerable have been altered or deracinated. The genius of innovation had reached our own island. The social elements heaved with ominous commotion. It was in this state of things—to use the language of the right hon. Baronet himself in his speech to the electors of Tamworth, and through them to country, in the year 1841—

"It was at that period, that those events took place in a neighbouring country (France) which exhibited to the world physical force triumphant over established Government—those events which led to a great revolution, not alone in that country, but in Europe; and which finally expelled a second time from the throne of that kingdom the elder branch of the House of Bourbon. Gentlemen, those events made a most profound impression throughout the whole of Europe. It agitated all countries in Europe—it led to revolution in some of them, and none escaped their great influence. This country was not exempt from it, and the consequence was a fundamental alteration in the Constitution of the House of Commons. Gentlemen, I then foresaw—for the alteration was accompanied by a useless and eager desire for still further change—I then, I say, foresaw the good that might result from laying the foundation of a great Conservative party in the State, attached to the fundamental institutions of the country, not opposed to any national change in it which the lapse of years or the altered circumstances of society might require, but determined to maintain on their ancient footing and foundation, our great institutions in Church and State. Gentlemen, the great object of my public life was not to gain for myself a position of political, that is to say, of official power, but to build up that great party which has been gradually acquiring strength in this country, which has been gradually widening the foundations on which it stands; that great party which has drawn from time to time its support from its opponents; that party which at first, not exceeding 100 in number, now presents a compact phalanx of 300 Members of Parliament—a body, too, Gentlemen—not even so strong in point of numbers as it is strong in the confidence of the country."

Here the report says, there were cheers and a slight interruption in the crowd.

"I may not be strong in your confidence," continued the right hon. Gentleman, addressing the party who caused the interruption. "I see here below me two or three boys and girls who deny my proposition; but still I say that the Conservative party have the confidence of the great proportion of the intelligence and respectability of the country."

I wonder, by the way, what these boys and girls would say now, or whether they too have changed their opinion, and with that one sentence disposed of all their former speeches. Be that as it may, the Conservative party had then the confidence of the country—it has it still—and the right hon. Gentleman had the confidence of both. How stands that account now? It was said on a hustings in this city, the other day, that his party were deserting, shamefully deserting, the right hon. Gentleman. His party deserting him! Is it not he, rather, who has without notice deserted, and so shaken, if not shattered, his party? Alas, Sir! when we look at the last ten years, and then at the last ten weeks, what feeling is it that possesses our minds? Here is a great party — the strongest and most united, perhaps, that ever sustained a Minister by its votes, or animated him by its faith—stricken down by the man whom it was its pride to uphold. Is it, then, wonderful, if this party—not his slave—(on his part there never was the superciliousness of dictation, nor on ours the abjectness of servility)—not his slave, but his companion, his friend, with whom he took sweet counsel, what time he "walked in the open light and direct paths of the Constitution"—is it strange, I ask, if this, his friend, the partner of his toils and sharer of his triumphs, having resisted the attack of the Leagued conspiracy yonder—having averted the stroke of Casca—having felt, but not faltered, under the keener steel of Cassius, conscious at last of a blow which has reached the seat of life, and turning to perceive that it has been directed by that arm to which, of all others, we looked for defence—that arm which our own strength had nerved, it should be, with the bitterness, not of death, but of a sharper pang than death knows—disappointed faith—that we exclaim—"*Et tu Brute!*" Ay; and if, in future times, posterity—as I believe the right hon. Gentleman justly hopes—shall ratify the decision of every calm judgment now, and admit that, if he made this great sacrifice—if "he slew his best love, it was for" what he deemed "the good of Rome"—be yet sure that, when the youth of future times, haply in those same halls, once associated with his position in this House, and still familiar with the echoes of his early fame, shall debate of him as our youth do now of the great example I have named—they will say it had been better for the name of Brutus—better for the fate of Rome—better for the myriads who, like us, are destined to be ruled—better for the few who, like him, are born to govern—that if Cæsar must fall, he had fallen by another hand. Sir, this is no light matter. If the right hon. Baronet is correct in his own definition of party purposes, the question of party is in this debate one of the utmost consequence. If the Conservative party are formed to maintain

the integrity of the British Constitution, to preserve our country from the shock of Continental revolutions—of changes which exhibit the principle of "physical force" triumphant over established Government—what can that measure be which, for the purposes of such party, is the very worst that can be devised? With this definition of his party, and this of his measure, how can the right hon. Gentleman blame me, if, adhering to the one which he says formed the great object of his political life, I feel myself compelled to oppose the other, which he avows is calculated to defeat it. Sir, if the measure before us were in principle acceptable to the House, what is it in the application of that principle? If the doctrines of free trade be the doctrines of common sense, then never was there a greater insult to common sense than the measure of the Prime Minister. It asserts with a loud and clamorous tongue—it applies with a feeble, uncertain, and timid hand. It is universal in rule; it is partial in application; it is bold, but its boldness is the daring recklessness of hazard and speculation, not the sound courage of honest enterprise. It protects the cane piece of Jamaica—it exposes to competition the corn field of England. It asserts that protection is the bane of agriculture; but it administers the bane for three more years. "This is poison," says the Minister; "but that you may live, I advise you to drink it for such a time." Sir, I feel I have to apologize to the House for having risen at so late an hour. I felt I had no choice; but one more word, and I shall sit down. In replying to the speech of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, the right hon. Baronet delivered a speech which he supposed himself to make to a farmer. The House will remember that speech—I need not repeat it. But the hon. Member for Northamptonshire had, for the sake of his argument, assumed the position of a free-trade landlord. In answering it, the right hon. Baronet proved that the free traders had indeed got his head, but that we still retained his heart—his understanding had been confused, but his practice was right; for, instead of pronouncing to his own tenants the speech of a free trader, he spoke the very words of a sound protectionist. I will not, Sir, at this hour, detain the House longer, but reserve myself for the Committee, as I am anxious, in common with the House, that we should divide.

Lord G. BENTINCK: Sir I can assure the House that, in asking for its patience, while I endeavour to answer some of the arguments which have been advanced on the other side, there is no man within its walls who feels so much as I do my unworthiness to ask for its indulgence. I have had the honour of a seat in this House in eight Parliaments; but have never yet once ventured to trespass upon its time on any subject of great debate. We oppose your leaving the chair, Sir, not only because we object to the great change that is proposed to be made in reference to the agricultural interest, but because we object in principle to the entire measure upon the details of which it is proposed that we should go into Committee. We see in that measure a proposition effecting a change in regard to no fewer than 1100 articles—a great commercial revolution, which we are of opinion that the circumstances of the country do not by any means require. Sir, it is not only that we object to the removal of protection from the agricultural interest, but we object also to the removal of protection from the shipping interest, from the silk trade, and from all the other interests connected with domestic industry which are injuriously affected by this proposed measure. My right hon. Friend the Secretary at War (Mr. S. Herbert), has called upon the agricultural interest to submit to this great change now, whilst, in his opinion, it can be accepted with honour, and before it is extorted from us by force, coupled with loss of honour, loss of character, loss of influence with, and loss of station in, the country. Sir, I wish to God I thought that this change could be carried by this House of Commons with honour, without loss of character, loss of influence, and loss of station with the country. Vicious as I think this measure, and injurious as I consider it to all the great interests of this country, I think I should feel it was deprived of half its vice if it could be carried by this House without loss of honour, damage to reputation, and forfeiture of public character, to a vast many Gentlemen who are now seated within its walls. It is but candid to Gentlemen opposite to say that their honour is not arraigned; for they have been the consistent advocates of free-trade principles, and came to this House pledged to maintain free-trade principles on which they avowedly solicited the suffrages of their constituents, and are now with honesty and fidelity maintaining. But when we are told by hon. Gentlemen, and more especially by the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Treasury, that this is not

a protection Parliament, I am at a loss to understand upon what principles they and he ground their assertion. Why, was not the subject of free trade in corn discussed over and over again prior to the dissolution of 1841? Sir, may I not ask if it were not, emphatically, upon the question whether or not we were to have a fixed duty of 8*s*. a quarter, or whether we were to have a higher protection, that Her Majesty appealed to the people in the year 1841? Sir, upon this subject there can be no mistake. It was not only the right hon. Baronet now at the head of the Government, then the leader of the Opposition, who challenged his opponents, and made the accusations against them that they were going to dissolve the Parliament upon a cry of "cheap bread;" but the Secretary of State for the Home Department followed in the same wake, and not only charged the Government with the intention to dissolve, but in making the accusation, charged them with the malice of the devil himself. Nay, he even charged them with something more than the malice of the devil himself; for, apostrophising the speech of Mr, Tierney addressed to Mr. Canning in 1807—in which he charged the Government of that day with something more than the malice of the devil himself, for devising a scheme such as a dissolution of Parliament upon a cry of "the Church in danger"—my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, upon being ironically cheered by the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell), exclaimed, "Well, you cheer that; but let me ask is a cry of 'the Church in danger' half so maddening, half so exciting to the feelings of the people, as the cry of 'cheap bread' when raised from the Treasury bench." I should like to know what cry has been raised now from the Treasury bench? Have we not had the cry of "cheap bread" from the Treasury bench? Have we not heard from my right hon. Friend that this is a landlord's question, and that he, for one, will no longer condescend to eke out his rents from the sufferings of the poor? But, to return to 1841, what was the course of proceeding at that time? The noble Lord at the head of the Government of that day found himself defeated by a vote of no confidence, by a majority of 312 to 311, and then the noble Lord advised Her Majesty to dissolve the Parliament. But what was the language adopted by Her Majesty in the Speech from the Throne when proroguing the Parliament preparatory to the dissolution in 1841? Her Majesty appealed to the sense of the people in these words:—

> "On a full consideration of the present state of public affairs, I have come to the determination of proroguing Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution. The paramount importance of the trade and industry of the country, and my anxiety that the exigencies of the public service should be provided for in the manner least burdensome to the community, have induced me to resort to the means which the Constitution has entrusted to me, of ascertaining the sense of my people upon matters which so deeply concern their welfare."

After that declaration from the Throne, I cannot help saying that every Member who was returned to Parliament at the general election which ensued was returned pledged by the Speech from the Throne. I appeal to the sense of this House—I appeal to the sense of the country—whether, after that speech, every Member who occupied a seat in this House, must not be considered as having been returned pledged to either one course or the other? ["No, no."] Well, Sir, though I hear a few cries of "No, no," that is my view of the matter, and as it appears to me it is the only correct view of the matter; and being of this opinion, I must repeat that in my opinion no Member of the old majority of this House can give his consent to this measure, as proposed by Her Majesty's Ministers for the repeal of the Corn Laws, without dishonour. But, Sir, we are told that there has been some change of circumstances, and that the experience of the last three years has proved that the recent commercial policy of the right hon. Baronet has been attended with the happiest results, and that the policy pursued during the last thirty years has been quite erroneous. Sir, the country will not be satisfied with three years' experience of any system. Three years' experience, I contend, is not sufficiently extensive to afford a proper criterion by which to decide the failure or success of any description of policy whatsoever. The right hon. Baronet has more especially founded his present belief in doctrines contrary to those which he has heretofore uniformly maintained, on the assumption that the price of corn will not be much reduced, and has argued that in the case of cattle and other commodities included in his Tariff of 1842, no diminution of price has resulted as a consequence of the relaxation of protective duties. He is also sanguine of success from the supposed results of free trade upon the silk trade, and has chal-

lenged the House to instance any one single example of a case in which the reduction of duty had not proved equally beneficial to the consumer and the producer. I accept his challenge. I will meet my right hon. Friend in his challenge in regard to silk; and I am also ready to encounter him as well as my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield on the article of wool. My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward) distinctly challenged my hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) on the article of wool; but my hon. Friend the Member for Somerset forgot to answer him, but I will do so for him; and I am also prepared to accept the challenge of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government in the matter of timber, and engage to show him the injurious effects of free trade in timber upon the prices of English oak, whilst I am at the same time prepared to demonstrate the evil consequences to the carrying trade of Great Britain, which have already resulted from the past measures, and must still more result from the proposed measures yet further reducing the differential duties between foreign and colonial timber. There is also another article, which was mentioned the other night by the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Muntz) — I allude to spelter. The right hon. Member for Stamford attempted to answer the hon. Member for Birmingham when he asserted that the spelter manufacture had been destroyed by the reduction of the protective duties; but utterly failed to overthrow his statements. The hon. Member for Birmingham stood up as a witness, and as he is, I believe, in his character of a hardware manufacturer, the consumer of a seventh part of all the spelter that is used in Great Britain, his evidence ought to be most valuable in this House. He has told us, that, although, perhaps, his branch of trade may have been assisted by the relaxation of prohibitory duties, the result of that relaxation has been utterly to annihilate every single concern for the raising and manufacture of zinc in its raw state. I think the hon. Member said there was one exception, and that was in a case where the lessee of the spelter mine had had the good fortune to hold the lease of a coal mine in conjunction with the spelter concern at a very low rent; but with that solitary exception the result of free trade as applied to spelter has been utterly to annihilate it. This statement remains up to the present hour, and, I take it, will continue to remain uncontroverted and uncontrovertible. I now, Sir, approach the subject of wool. Let us see, then, whether the experience of the past three years, with respect to that commodity, has been such as to afford a valid argument why the duty on corn should be repealed. Sir, this "wool" argument is a most convenient weapon in the hands of the right hon. Baronet. In 1846 the results of a free trade in wool afforded my right hon. Friend a most irresistible argument to his mind in favour of free trade in corn; the happy results which he sees in 1846, of the removal of 1*d.* per lb. duty on foreign wool in 1842, convince him of the indubitable policy of an entire removal of all protection to home-grown corn and to the landed interests of the British Empire. But, Sir, I well remember my right hon. Friend, in a speech which, from its surpassing ability, will never be forgotten, triumphantly appealed in 1839, not to three years' experience, but to twenty years' experience, of the operation of a protecting duty on wool, as the best possible reason why we should maintain high duties on corn. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, when he challenged my hon. Friend below me (Mr. Miles) on this subject, facetiously observed that the agricultural interests were wholly incapable of taking care of themselves; that, in fact, you could not do them so great an unkindness, indeed you could not inflict so great a cruelty upon them, as to indulge them in their taste and passion for protective legislation; and, referring to the year 1825, he said that in one of these fits of foolishness they had resisted, tooth and nail, the friendly efforts of the late Mr. Huskisson to remove the 6*d.* protecting duty on foreign wool, which was their bane. Happily, however, for these poor misguided, benighted agriculturists, who were so blind to their own interests, Mr. Huskisson was too strong for them, and, in spite of them, succeeded in taking off the duty; "and what," triumphantly exclaimed my hon. Friend, "was the result?" Answering his own inquiry, he said—

> "The result was, that the price of English wool instantly rose higher, and for the next five years, continued higher than it was ever known before."

Undoubtedly, Sir, this was a wonderful statement, if true; but let us first examine into the matter of fact; and here I will appeal to an authority which will not be doubted, at least on the Treasury bench—I appeal to the authority of Sir Robert Peel in 1839. Sir Robert Peel, in 1839, stated,

in his place from the benches opposite, that a duty of 6*d.* per lb. was placed on foreign wool in December, 1819, and that this duty was continued until the 10th or 20th of December, 1824. Well, what does he say was the effect and consequence of this protecting duty of 6*d.* per lb. on foreign wool? He says, the consequence was, that the price of wool remained steady and unwavering at 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb. for five entire years, that is to say, from 1820 to 1824, both years inclusive. In December, 1824, the protecting duty of 6*d.* per lb. was reduced to 1*d.* What happened? Did "English Southdown wool rise higher the next five years than ever was known before," as stated by the hon. Member for Sheffield? No such thing, Sir; far from rising, it fell from 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb. in 1824, to 1*s.* per lb. in 1825; it remained at 1*s.* per lb. in 1826. In 1827, there was a still further fall to 9*d.* per lb., and it remained at 9*d.* per lb. in 1828, and 9*d.* per lb. in 1829. The House and the country, therefore, will see that so far from the price of English Southdown wool having been enhanced, as stated by the hon. Member for Sheffield, it was greatly reduced, as the natural and direct consequence of the reduction of the protecting duty. Have I not now, then, met the right hon. Baronet, who challenged us to instance a case where the reduction of duty had proved disadvantageous either to consumer or producer? Is it not manifest that in the case of wool, at all events, the producer has been materially injured? I think I ought to mention at the same time, that during these five years, when the duty of 6*d.* was imposed, it did not interfere with the prosperity of the import trade; for I find, on looking to the returns, that the imports in wool amounted to 10,000,000 lbs. in 1820, and that in 1824 they rose to 22,000,000 lbs. This proves that the protective duty of 6*d.* maintained the price at home, and did not prevent the importation of such additional supply as might be required to supply the wants of the manufacturing interest. I believe the duty on foreign wool imported into this country in 1823 amounted to 375,000*l.*; and in the present state of this country are we to be told that the loss of such a source of revenue is a mean and insignificant consideration? The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), when alluding to the subject of wool, went back to 1842, selecting a year of great depression, when he told you the price of wool was down at 11½*d.* per lb.; but that in 1844 and 1845 it rose to 1*s.* 2*d.* per lb. He also told you that the importation of foreign wool was only 45,880,000 lbs. in 1842, that in 1844 there were 65,079,000 lbs. imported; and in ten months of the last year the importation amounted to 65,216,000 lbs. (which quantity, it appears by the return since laid before the House, has been further increased to upwards of 76,000,000 lbs.); and that this increase of importation, and increase of price was "all in consequence of the reduction of duty." If he had gone back to 1836, ten years ago, during the reign of his rivals, the Whigs, he would have found that the importation was upwards of 64,000,000lbs., and that in 1835 the price of wool was not 1*s.* 2*d.*, but 1*s.* 10*d.*; in 1836, 1*s.* 8*d.*; in 1837, 1*s.* 8*d.*; in 1838, 1*s.* 4*d.*; in 1839, 1*s.* 3*d.*, a great deal higher than under his much-vaunted three years of free trade. It is much to be lamented, I think, that the right hon. Baronet should have restricted his view to three years only. If he had taken the trouble to refer to the years which I have specified, it is probable he would have come to a different conclusion from that at which he has arrived. Having disposed of wool, I will now examine how far my right hon. Friend is justified in introducing so mighty a change, as regards the landed interest, as an entire repeal of the Corn Laws, upon what he considers the perfectly successful and satisfactory results of a similar experiment in regard to cattle. My right hon. Friend reverted to the fears entertained by the agricultural interest, in 1842, at his proposal to admit cattle at a low duty, and triumphantly appealed to the results of that measure, in proof not only of the visionary character of the fears of the agriculturists, but my right hon. Friend even went the length of arguing, that the free admission of cattle, sheep, and pigs, had actually improved the prices of meat in England, and in proof of the truth of this argument he gave these as the contract prices of fresh beef, salt beef, and pork for the navy, in the years 1844 and 1845:—

	1844.	1845.
Fresh Beef	£1 14 9	£2 2 9
Salt Beef	3 18 2	6 8 8
Pork	3 15 10	6 12 0

Arguing that this extraordinary rise in the price of meat "was all in consequence of the reductions in the Tariff of 1842." Now, Sir, whilst I cannot help observing as I pass that those engaged in supplying Her Majesty's navy cannot have been very

happy in the markets to which they went in 1845, I must take leave to say that if, instead of restricting his view to 1845, my right hon. Friend had only taken a view of the prices of meat for the last seven years, he would have found very different results, and probably have come to very opposite conclusions. Sir, I hold in my hand the contract prices of provisions in the workhouses of a number of Unions in various parts of the Empire for the last seven years; but, for fear of wearying the House, I will be content to quote one or two only. I will first take a metropolitan parish, St. George's, Hanover-square; it is a return of the contract prices for the third week in January in each year :—

Contract price of meat. per 8lbs.		
1841—3*s.* 6*d.*	Average of two years previous to the passing of the new Tariff, 3*s.* 9½*d.*	
1842—4*s.* 1*d.*		
1843—3*s.* 2*d.*	Average of four years subsequent to the passing of ditto, 2*s.* 11½*d.* 2-4ths.	
1844—2*s.* 7½*d.*		
1845—2*s.* 11*d.*		
1846—3*s.* 2*d.*		

Thus, instead of an average rise of price in consequence of the new Tariff, the average prices of meat were nearly 30 per cent. higher during the two years previous to the new Tariff than they have been upon an average of the four years subsequent to it.

The Liverpool workhouse shows similar results :—

Contract price of meat. Cwt.		
1840—47*s.* 6*d.*	Average of two years antecedent to the passing of the new Tariff, 47*s.* 2*d.* per cwt.	
1841—46*s.* 8*d.*		
1842—49*s.* 0*d.*	Average of four years subsequent to ditto, 41*s.* 0½*d.*	
1843—37*s.* 4*d.*		
1844—37*s.* 3*d.*		
1845—42*s.* 11*d.*		
1846—46*s.* 8*d.*		

This is the statement of the contract prices of meat for the last quarters in each year at the Union Workhouse in the Borough of King's Lynn, which I myself represent.

Beef per stone.	
1840—6*s.* 6*d.*	Average, 6*s.* 9*d.*, antecedent to the new Tariff.
1841—7*s.* 0*d.*	
1842—6*s.* 6*d.*	Average subsequent to the new Tariff, 5*s.* 11¼*d.*
1843—5*s.* 3*d.*	
1844—6*s.* 6*d.*	
1846—6*s.* 0*d.*	

But, Sir, whilst I thus state that the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government, if not absolutely wrong in his facts, has at least given a false colouring to the effects of his Tariff, by selecting particular years to suit his purpose, let me not be misunderstood as meaning to convey to this House that the importation of such an insignificant quantity of cattle as twenty-four thousand, can have affected the prices of cattle either for good or for evil. It must be clear to every one that as regards the importation of cattle, the new Tariff has been entirely inoperative. And recollecting as I do how strenuously my right hon. Friends on the Treasury bench, previously to the introduction of that measure, urged upon their then agricultural Friends that this would be the case—assuring us that there were no foreign cattle to come, and the sole object was to strengthen the hands of the agricultural interest as regarded more essential and more effectual protections, by removing from them the odium of a nominal protection, which, practically, was no protection at all, it is hardly ingenuous in my right hon. Friend to turn round upon the agricultural interest, and say, "See how I have raised the price of meat in 1845 by my Tariff of 1842, and the consequent introduction of 24,000 head of foreign cattle." My right hon. Friend knows full well that, as regards cattle, his Tariff of 1842 has been, virtually, as he intended it to be, wholly inoperative. Convinced by my right hon. Friends, in 1842, that such would be the case, I gave my cordial support to that measure. Sir, I will now meet the challenge of Her Majesty's Ministers, and especially that of my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, in regard to silk. The silk trade has been made the great battle horse of the Ministry; and the great success, as alleged, of the free trade in silk, has been put forth with great parade, as an unanswerable argument why free trade in corn cannot fail to benefit all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, producers as well as consumers. Sir, I undertake to show, that free trade in silk has proved a signal failure. But before I go into the details of the silk question, I must explain to the House that there are three descriptions of silk: first there is "raw silk," varying in value from 14*s.* to 20*s.* per lb.; then there is "thrown silk," varying in value from 20*s.* to 28*s.* per lb.; and lastly, there are "knubs and husks," which mean the "scales, excrements, and offals of the silkworm," worth no more than from 6*d.* to 10*d.* per lb., and which no more resemble and no more compare with raw silk, than chaff or straw can compare with the grain of wheat, or than the offals of cattle resemble beef. To work up 2,000 lbs. weight of "knubs and husks," would occupy sixty or seventy persons no longer time than it would oc-

cupy 700 or 800 persons to work up and manufacture the same weight of raw or thrown silk, that is, one week. It will be clear, therefore, to the House and to the country, that to mix up "raw silk," "thrown silk," and "knubs and husks," in one common mass, would be to play off a complete delusion upon this House and upon the country; yet such, Sir, was the course adopted by my right hon. Friend the First Minister of the Crown, and such was also the course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade. This was the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the First Minister of the Crown. After adverting to the hard names applied to Mr. Huskisson some twenty years ago by the friends of the silk weavers, the right hon. Baronet went on, the other night, to ask what was the result of Mr. Huskisson's measures :—

Were hundreds of thousands of silk manufacturers thrown out of employment? Have the poor rates been burdened for their subsistence? Have we been unable to compete with foreigners? In the decennial period ending in 1823, the quantity of silk entered for home consumption was 19,409,023 lb.; for the ten years ending 1833, 39,681,248 lb., immediately after the reduction of the duty; for the ten years ending 1843, 52,007,118 lb. The aggregate annual consumption of the successive decennial periods was 1,940,000 lb., for the ten years ending 1823; 3,968,124 lb. for the ten years ending 1833; 5,200,711 lb., for the ten years ending 1843, a further reduction of duty having taken place in 1842; whereas now the consumption, which for the ten years ending in 1823 was 1,940,902 lb., is now (for the single year 1844) 6,208,028 lb. Which is the true philanthropist? Is it the man who cries out against the admission of French papers? Was it the man who cried out against the admission of French silks? Or, was it the Minister who said, 'Good God! don't suppose I do not sympathize with distress. Don't load me with the reproach of causing ruin to thousands when I am endeavouring to benefit them!' I have seen Spitalfields at the point of starvation; let me trace the cause of such calamities, and try whether by bringing in the free air of competition, I cannot diminish or remove the sources of such calamities."

Sir, with the leave and indulgence of the House, I will tell you how all this was; but I must commence by explaining to the House that, prior to the 25th of March, 1824, whilst there was either absolute prohibition, or else duties practically amounting to prohibition, upon all silken articles of foreign manufacture, there existed, at the same time, high revenue duties upon the importation of thrown and upon the importation of raw silk, annually bringing in, as I shall show you, a large harvest of revenue to the Exchequer. The duties on raw silk until the 25th of March, 1824, were 5*s.* 6*d.* per lb.; these duties were then reduced to 3*d.* per lb.; but were finally reduced on the 5th July, 1826, to 1*d.* per lb. In like manner, the duties on thrown silk, which, up to the 25th of March, 1825, were 14*s.* 8*d.* per lb., were reduced on that day to 7*s.* 6*d.* per lb.; on the 15th of November in the same year to 5*s.* per lb. Further reductions took place in July, 1829, whereby thrown silks were classed according to value, singles paying 1*s.* 6*d.*, trams 2*s.*, and organzines 3*s.* 6*d.*; and finally, in 1842, all were charged alike 1*s.* and three-fifths of a 1*d.* per lb. Having thus, I fear, at too great length explained the exact history and position of the silk trade, I will now proceed to contrast the progress of the silk trade in its protected state previous to 1824, with its progress subsequent to 1824, "when breathing the free air of competition." Sir, that the accuracy of my statement may be above dispute, I have selected my data as regards the period of protection, from the tables of the late Mr. Deacon Hume; and I have taken three triennial periods, commencing with 1815, and concluding with the conclusion of the protected trade in 1823, the last triennial period being six years in advance of the first. This then is the state of the trade whilst fostered and cherished by high protecting duties :—

UNDER PROTECTION.

Raw silk, worth 14*s.* to 20*s.* per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average, 1,095,000 lb.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average 1,504,000 lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average 1,970,000 lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 90 per cent.

Home consumption—Thrown silk, worth 20*s.* to 28*s.* per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average 293,000 lbs.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average 340,000 lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average 355,000 lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 23 per cent.

Knubs and husks, viz., the scales, nests, excrements and offals of the silkworm, worth from 6*d.* to 10*d.* per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average 27,062 lbs.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average 84,984 lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average 74,110 lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 170 per cent.

Duty received on foreign silk and silk manufactures, 1815, 1816, 1817—average 466,000*l.*; 1818, 1819, 1820—average 630,300*l.*; 1831, 1833, 1833—average 754,000*l.*; increase as compared with triennial period, 1815-16-17, 64 per cent.

Showing, under protection, a steady progress of the silk trade to the amount of 90 per cent in the home consumption of raw silk; 23 per cent in respect of thrown silk; of 170 per cent in knubs and husks; and last, but not least, of 64 per cent in the amount of revenue paid into the public Exchequer. Now, Sir, let us contrast this

picture with that of the silk trade under free trade. And here I beg leave to state that I am obliged to take not a triennial period six years in advance, but a triennial average nine years in advance of the last triennial period under the system of high protection. The House, therefore, will see that the comparison is highly advantageous to the argument of Her Majesty's Ministers, and to the same extent disadvantageous to my argument; but I shall show the House that the silk trade under protection can spare even so great a disadvantage in the comparison. The reason I cannot take, as in fairness to my own argument I ought to take, the triennial period 1827, 1828, and 1829, is, that during the first five years of the free-trade experiment, "knubs and husks" were mixed up in one common mass with "raw silk;" so it is practically impossible to come to any just or sound conclusion as to the progress of the silk trade during those years. I shall take, therefore, the first triennial period free from this objection. I shall now give the statement:—

"Raw silk—1830, 1831, 1832, average 3,403,082, increase in nine years 72 per cent; 1842, 1843, 1844, average 3,869,328 lbs., increase in twenty-one years, 100 per cent.

"Thrown silk—1830, 1831, 1832, 426,902 lbs., increase in nine years, 19 per cent; 1842, 1843, 1844, 394,958 lbs., increase in twenty-one years, 10½ per cent.

Knubs and husks—1830, 1831, 1832, 835,985 lbs., increase in nine years, 730 per cent; 1842, 1843, 1844, 1,548,064, increase in twenty-one years 2,000 per cent.

"Duty received on foreign silk and silk manufactures—1830, 1831, 1832, 210,973*l.*, revenue sacrificed, 543,027*l.*; 1842, 1843, 1844, 285,768*l.*—absolute loss and sacrifice of revenue, 468,232*l.*"

The result being that, whilst under a highly protected trade, the home consumption of raw silk advanced at the rate of 90 per cent in six years, and that of thrown silk 23 per cent in the same period, the public revenue at the same time increasing at the rate of 64 per cent; under the blasting effects of free trade the progress of the silk trade fell down to an increase of only 72 per cent in nine years, and no more than 100 per cent in twenty-one years in respect to the home consumption of the raw silk, whilst in thrown silk the home consumption, which in the first nine years of free trade had increased 19 per cent, as compared with 23 per cent, in the six years under protection, actually fell down to an increase of only 10½ per cent upon the whole period of 21 years; and as regards revenue, instead of an increase of 64 per cent in six years, under protection, an absolute loss of no less than 468,232*l.* per annum had to be submitted to by the Exchequer, a great portion of which unquestionably must have been extracted from the industry and from the pockets of Italians and Frenchmen. Lastly, as regards the silk trade, I come to the most important and painful bearing of free trade upon the wages, the comforts, and the morals of the unfortunate people, engaged in the lower ranks of the trade. With respect to the operation of free-trade measures on the silk weaver, I will (continued the noble Lord) take the evidence adduced before a Committee which sat in 1832. The first witness to whose evidence I will refer, is Mr. Grout, an extensive silk manufacturer in Norwich. He states that, up to 1824, the number of hands employed was 3,594, and that their wages averaged 8*s.* 1½*d.* per week. In 1831, the number of hands fell to 1,877, and their wages to 3*s.* 8½*d.* Thus, the gross amount of wages, which up to 1824 amounted to 60,000*l.*, had fallen off to 16,000*l.* in 1831; showing a reduction in wages of 44,000*l.* So much for the beneficial effects of the relaxation of protective duties, as far as the employment of silk weavers is concerned. Now I will refer to the moral condition of the weaver, as detailed in the evidence of the same witness. He said it was not only a reduction of wages that they had to submit to, but he had been obliged to discharge a great number. Some of the men had emigrated; others had gone to the poorhouse; and many of the females had gone to a state of prostitution from necessity. "Their condition," he added, "is most abject, and much to be pitied." Mr. Brocklehurst, a Member of this House, was also examined before the same Committee. He was asked—

"What has been the condition, since 1826, of the people employed in the mills?"

He answered—

"In 1826, when overtaken by this change, they were living in comfortably furnished houses, and were amply provided for. When distress first assailed them they fell back on their little properties, which they gradually disposed of. They are now reduced to a state of utter destitution; hundreds of them are without change of clothes, and in many instances without a bed, sleeping on straw, and covered with their clothes worn in the day. Gross demoralization has been the result, and the once respectable and industrious artisan is now broken-hearted, and reduced to pauperism. Two-thirds of the people are found to be in want of the common necessaries of life."

These are the fruits of your much-lauded free trade. The duties on silk manufactures had then been reduced to something like 30 per cent. It is now proposed to reduce the protection to half that amount. Now, let us see what was the operation of that original reduction of protection upon wages. The silk weavers assured me that, up to 1823, when their wages were regulated by Act of Parliament, for weaving the article I hold in my hand, which is called royal floret, they earned 2*s.* 4*d.* a day. In 1825 their wages were reduced to 14*d.* a day. And now, in consequence of the intended reduction, their wages were to be further reduced from 14*d.* to 12*d.* a day. My informant assured me, that he could weave, with great industry, 20 yards of royal floret in a week, consequently a reduction of 2*d.* per yard would be equivalent to a reduction upon the aggregate work of a week of 3*s.* 4*d.* I ask you, then, whether you think that the silk weavers will be benefited by free trade? I think they were not far wrong, when they stated, in the petition which I presented to the House, that for a period of twenty years, experience and common sense had taught them that cheap bread was of no use to man, woman, or child unless they could obtain wages adequate to purchase it. ["Divide, divide."] I trust the House will recollect that I am now fighting the battle of a party whose leaders have deserted them; and if I cannot wield my weapons with the same skill as the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury benches do theirs, I trust the House will, for the sake of the cause I am supporting, show me some forbearance. I shall now go to an article termed ladies' fine velvet. So long as the trade was protected, the silk weavers received 4*s.* 3*d.* a yard for manufacturing this article; and I understand that a very superior journeyman, with great labour, may manufacture from eight to ten yards per week. In consequence of the diminution in the protective duties their wages were reduced, in 1825, to 2*s.* 6*d.* a yard; and on Thursday week last, on account of the proposed measure, they received notice of a further reduction of 3*d.* a yard. Now, Sir I leave it to the House whether a man, who can manufacture ten yards a week, and has his wages reduced 3*d.* a yard (amounting to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, or 130*s.* a year), can derive any advantage from cheap bread equivalent to that reduction of wages? It is well known to every Gentleman in this House, that the estimated consumption of each man per annum is one quarter of wheat. I leave it, then, to the House and the country to decide, whether, on the supposition that a man by his own labour has to sustain himself, a wife, and three children on a quarter of wheat each, any difference that can arise in the price of wheat in consequence of free trade, will compensate him for the loss of 3*d.* per yard on the article of his manufacture of which he manufactures ten yards in the course of a week? Why, it is clear to every one that the poor silk weaver would be better off with his old wages and wheat at 70*s.* a quarter, than he will be now with his wages reduced 3*d.* a yard, with wheat reduced to 45*s.* per quarter. ["No."] No! why, I believe five times twenty-five make 125*s.*, while the loss on his wages amounts to 130*s.* I challenge any hon. Gentleman opposite to refute that statement. I ask, would not the silk weavers be better off with wheat at 70*s.* a quarter, with their wages unreduced, than they will be with reduced wages—with wages reduced 2*s.* 6*d.* a week under the free-trade system, though the price of wheat should be reduced to 45*s.* a quarter? Great stress has been laid upon the argument, that by opening the trade in corn you will be conferring a benefit on the labouring classes; and for the first time that I ever heard such a strange doctrine propounded, we had heard it maintained from the Treasury bench, "that the rate of wages has nothing to do with the price of corn;" nay, even more than this, that the rate of wages rises and falls in the inverse ratio to the rise and fall in the price of corn. I confess this novel doctrine sounded strangely in my ears, more especially when I heard it propounded, not only by the First Minister of the Crown, but also by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department; for I thought I could remember a celebrated address to the landowners of England, wherein my right hon. Friend laid it down as a proposition not to be refuted—

> "That the wages of labour sink to the price of corn, though the taxes remain and must be paid out of diminished earnings."

My right hon. Friend, in supporting that proposition, contended that the happiness and prosperity of the lower classes of the people, far from depending on a reduced price of corn, was apt to be least when prices were lowest. Reviewing the concluding period of the French war, during

which the prices of wheat had been as high as 125*s.*, averaging, I believe, somewhere about 100*s.* a quarter, he tells us that, in 1815 or 1816—

"The price of wheat fell to 64*s.*, and then ensued such a scene both of agricultural and commercial distress as this unhappy country had at that time never witnessed."

My right hon. Friend continued his history down to the years 1821, 1822, and 1823. In 1822 the price of wheat fell to 43*s.*; and during this period of three years the price of wheat averaged under 50*s.* We are told now that we have nothing to do but to open the ports and reduce the price of corn; and that comfort, happiness, and contentment will follow, as far as the working classes are concerned. But what says my right hon. Friend writing the history of those three "*bitter years*," when bread was so cheap in 1821, 1822, and 1823? Describing the condition of Ireland, as spoken to in the evidence of Mr. Nolan before the Distress Committee of the House of Commons, my right hon. Friend says—

"In Ireland distress is greatest when provisions are cheapest; then we see famine without dearth; hunger amidst superabundance of provisions; farmers without a market; labourers without the means of purchase; it was the fall of prices in which famine originated; that fall prevents the tenant from paying the rent; then the miserable stock of the miserable tenantry is seized, next the labourer is left destitute without employment, and then ensues a scene of famine and despair, of tumult and bloodshed suppressed by military force."

Such, Sir, was the sad picture drawn by my right hon. Friend of the results of low prices in Ireland in 1822. But how was it in England? My right hon. Friend says that—

"Amidst the ruin of the farmer and the manufacturer, the distress of landlords, and the insurrections of a populace without bread and without employment, one class alone flourished and was triumphant; the annuitant and the tax-eater rejoiced in the increased and increasing value of money—rejoiced in the sacrifice of productive industry to unproductive wealth—rejoiced in the victory of the drones over the bees."

My right hon. Friend must have been thinking of the tax-eaters and tax-consumers when, in introducing this measure to the House, he told us that the wages of labour did not depend upon the price of corn. Undoubtedly their wages do not sink to the price of corn, but the contrary. But I must not forget the speech of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who cast so much obloquy on Gentlemen on this side of the House; and, though I will not attempt to cast back upon him the hard epithets he applied to my Friends on this side of the House, I must say that his speech was not one overflowing with the milk of human kindness. But when the hon. Member for Wolverhampton comes forward, and stands up as a witness before this House and the country against the landlords of England, and describes them as a set of men wholly indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and talks of them "as idle consumers, to whom it might justly be made a matter of congratulation that food was scarce and the people dying of starvation;" I think I am entitled to insist that he should himself be questioned upon what in legal phrase in Westminster Hall is, I believe, termed the "*Voir dire;*" and I have a right to ask, and the country to know, whether he is altogether a disinterested witness—whether he has not some pecuniary interest in this matter? I have a right to ask him, and the country has a right to know, whether or not, as an Examiner in the Court of Chancery, enjoying a snug sinecure of some 1,000*l.* or 1,200*l.* a year out of the taxes levied on the people, he does not come within the category of my right hon. Friend—whether he is not "one of those annuitants and tax-eaters who rejoice in the increased and increasing value of money, who rejoice in the sacrifice of productive industry to unproductive wealth; who rejoice in the victory of the drones over the bees?" Sir, we have been taunted on this side of the House with dealings in revilings of the right hon. Gentlemen who have deserted us and their principles on this occasion, and also with having used no arguments in support of our views. I thought in the admirable speech of my hon. Friend (Mr. S. O'Brien) who sits beside me, replete as it was with argument, as well as in the speeches of many others of my Friends around me, especially that of my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury, we might have well claimed exemption from the unjust taunt that we have brought no arguments to our support. But to return to the heart-stirring speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Northamptonshire; my right hon. Friend the First Minister of the Crown thought fit to mock the speech of my hon. Friend, and instead of the touching appeal and reply of tenant and landlord, which my hon. Friend so well and so feelingly imagined and gave utterance to, my right hon. Friend suggested another speech to be put into the mouth of the landlord, in which, out of his supposed and visionary savings by free trade, the unhappy land-

lord was to offer an advance of capital to his tenant to enable him, by improvements of his farm, to compensate in increased quantity for the loss which he might incur through the reduced value of his produce consequent upon the repeal of the Corn Laws. Such an observation, I think, did not come with a good grace from the right hon. Baronet. The old landed aristocracy have done their duty to their tenants, but are not in a position to advance capital to enable them to increase the products of the soil. The right hon. Gentleman, when he goes down to Drayton Manor, and surveys the broad acres and wide domains which surround that splendid mansion, might have recollected that they once belonged to the old aristocracy of England. He might have remembered that a Bill passed in 1819, changing the currency, and that that Bill bore the name of the right hon. Gentleman at its back; and whilst, Sir, in referring to that law, it is far from my wish or meaning to impute anything but the most perfect innocence of intention, the right hon. Gentleman is said to have added by that law half a million sterling to the vast wealth of his family, whilst in a like degree it diminished from the wealth and crippled the resources of the old landed aristocracy. I think, then, it was rather hard on the part of the right hon. Baronet, to turn round now upon the old landed proprietors of England, and taunt them with not advancing the capital which, I am sorry to say, they no longer possess, to improve the farms of their tenants, now about to be injured by free trade. But, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman is himself a landlord, and, if I mistake not, some time in 1842 or 1843, after passing his Tariff, went down and addressed a landlord's speech to some 250 or 300 of his tenantry at Tamworth. I do not think he began, "My good fellows!" that might be too familiar in the First Minister of the Crown, and might lead to too great expectations. He did not begin, "My good fellows," but began, "Gentlemen!" Destruction of rabbits was promised, something conditional said about hares, long leases too were hinted at: nay, in one instance, a lease was proclaimed to have been actually granted where to be sure the land was run out, and the farm out of condition, and the tenant was to set out with a low rent, which was to rise by a sliding-scale as his leases went on. Lastly, after exciting the expectations of his hearers, who were looking, no doubt, to reduction of rent, some by fifteen, some by twenty, and some perhaps even by 50 per cent, my right hon. Friend, after adverting to the great advantage of improved stocks, wound up his courage and liberality to the uttermost, and went the length of this gracious announcement:—"Regardless of the expense of the animal, at my own entire cost, I will purchase, say a bull, and give free access to that animal, not only to my tenants, but to the cows of my tenants as well." But, for my life, I cannot recollect that my right hon. Friend, out of his savings from his new Tariff ever hinted a syllable of putting his hands into his breeches pockets, and advancing any capital to his tenants, in compensation for the operation and injury done to them by his new Tariff. Such are the differences between the practice, the speeches, and the professions in this House of my right hon. Friend. ["Order!" "Chair!"] Sir, I now come to the pretext of "famine in the land;" out of the false cry of which in England, and the exaggerated cry of which in Ireland, this Government measure for the repeal of the Corn Laws has really arisen; and since that cry first obtained importance from the sanction it received in a voice from Scotland, conveyed in a letter dated the 15th of November, and written by the noble Lord the Member for the city of London. I will take the kingdom of Scotland first, and examine how much real truth there was in the alarm of famine thus proclaimed from Edinburgh in November. That my authorities may be above all suspicion, they shall be restricted to such information as may be gathered from the printed circulars of the corn trade itself. I will begin with the circular of Messrs. A. and R. Smart and Co., of Montrose, of date the 12th of December, 1845. What say they? They say—

"Sir—In consequence of the alarm and uncertainty about the state of the potatoes, we have not submitted our report of the harvest earlier to you, in order that we might gather more particular information, and ascertain how they would keep in the pits. After careful inquiry, we have come to the conclusion that from this district there will be fully the usual quantity exported of sound quality. Though they have, in many localities, been tainted more or less with the disease prevalent in other parts of the kingdom, and have, in some few instances, suffered partially in the pits; yet, as none but those which are tainted will be used for cattle, or other feeding purposes, we think fully as many will be made available for human food as in a season of abundance.

"Wheat, notwithstanding the untoward character of the season, is proving a fair average crop in quantity, but of various quality. There is not a large breadth cultivated, and only a trifling quantity exported from this district; but from some of

the northern counties, where we ship, a good many cargoes can be spared. The weights at present run from 56 to 62½lb.; but as the season advances we may expect them to increase.

"Oats are a full average crop, unless on the high and cold lands, where they were exceedingly late, and did not thoroughly ripen. Their quality is fair—weights from 39 to 43lbs. Potato oats can be shipped in good condition about 42 to 42½lb.; Angus, 41 to 42lb.

"Viewing all the crops together, we consider the harvest in this district, and all to the north of it, a very abundant one."

So much, Sir, for the prevalence of dearth in the neighbourhood of and north of Montrose. I will now cross the island, and see how it fared in the west of Scotland. This is an account of the Glasgow corn trade. It is from Brown and Co.'s circular. Here it is, Sir:—

"Glasgow, Dec. 31, 1845.

"We beg to refer to the statement at foot, showing the annual stock of grain in granary since 1841:—

STATE OF STOCKS AT THIS DATE FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Years.		Wheat. Bolls of 240lb.	Barley. Bolls of 320lb.	Oats. Bolls of 264lb.	Beans and Peas. Bolls of 4 Bushels	Flour. Barrels, 196lb.	Flour. Sacks, 280lb.	Oatmeal. Loads of 280lb.
1841	Free...	85,800	16,860	67,120	50,180	18,310	7,590	15,040
	Bond..	17,760	730	840	6,540	12,289	None	None
1842	Free...	164,850	9,088	54,450	27,286	6,597	2,370	15,929
	Bond..	18,073	5,525	None	25,810	12,708	None	None
1843	Free...	140,267	15,954	52,047	16,779	15,489	6,023	41,217
	Bond..	13,151	None	None	25,927	330	None	None
1844	Free...	112,212	24,767	20,724	17,076	22,547	7,054	33,675
	Bond..	29,326	None	None	927	6,082	None	None
1845	Free...	158,333	18,674	29,162	12,325	56,353	23,780	24,837
	Bond.	78,854	67	None	2,552	9,449	None	None"

Showing an absolute excess in the stock on hand on the 31st of last December of no less than 54,264 bolls of wheat, and of 46,497 barrels and 21,419 sacks of wheat flour, as compared with the largest stock of wheat and wheat flour ever before known to be on hand in the city of Glasgow at any corresponding period of the last five years! Oh, Sir! what a tale of famine is this to have been imposed as such upon a credulous nation, and wherewithal to have half frightened the people of England and the Queen's Ministers quite out of their senses! But, Sir, with the leave of the House, I must read one sentence more in the circular of Messrs. Brown and Co., as, in my opinion, it will go far to enlighten this House in regard to the progress of the Scottish nation as regards their comforts and condition. What say Messrs. Brown? They say—

"Our stock of wheat on hand exceeds by far that of any previous year, notwithstanding a decided considerable change in the national taste from oatmeal to wheaten flour, of which the consumption has been unprecedented. The latter, we are inclined to think, applies to most of the large towns in this kingdom. Of wheat the crop of 1844 was of a superior order both in yield and in quality all over the United Kingdom and Ireland. The productiveness of that crop becomes more apparent on comparison with former stocks and this year's, which latter, with a trifling exception, is all of the growth of 1844, exhibiting an increase of 46,120 bolls of free, and 49,528 bolls of bonded over 1844. The crop of 1845, considered a fair average in quantity, but deficient in quality, has not yet got into condition, so that we are lying heavy on old wheat for baker's purposes. The value of wheat, compared with last year's same period, is about 10*s.* higher for old, and 4*s.* for new, per boll of 240 lb."

Thus, Sir, I have shown you, not only that so far from a famine prevailing in Glasgow and in the west of Scotland in December last, the stores of grain were unprecedented, whilst a very considerable improvement had taken place in the condition, the comforts, and the habits of the people of Scotland. ["Hear!" *and* "Order!"] Why should I thus be interrupted? Is it because I speak of the comforts of the people—is it nothing in the estimation of some to speak of their comforts—to speak of the comforts of the poor? I am anxious to show, in defence of my Friends who have argued for protection, the advantages which have resulted from protective laws, and that they are the real friends of the poor. I am anxious to show the wonderful increase which has taken place in all that pertains to the food of the people under protection. In Glasgow, a decided change for the better has taken place; there the people have advanced in their taste and in their comforts, from oatmeal to the use of wheaten flour. Whereas, let it be remembered, when the right hon. Baronet introduced his Corn Law in 1842, he was obliged to acknowledge the immense

number that were there—I forget whether in Glasgow or in Paisley—existing only upon charity; but this I remember well, the numbers then kept alive by charity were 17,000. It would appear, too, that the pleasing advance in Glasgow was also visible in various other towns in Scotland. That the wheat crop in 1844 was so superior in quality and amount in comparison with any former stock, that even in last December they had not commenced the use of the crop for the year 1845, besides the large quantities in bond. [*Interruption.*] I make no charge against those who are opposed to us on this question. I am only defending my party by indubitable evidence from the attacks of indifference to the comforts of the poor, which were advanced against us—that we cared not so we preserved our own interests though they were starving. You first make a charge against us, and then you are afraid to hear the answer. Last, as regards Scotland, I travel back to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, from whence, on the 2nd of December the celebrated letter of the noble Lord the Member for the city of London was written. I am now going to read you some extracts from the circular of Messrs. Grindlay, Cowan, and Co. It is dated—

"Leith, Dec. 17, 1845.

"Sir—Although our harvest has been finished fully six weeks ago, we have deferred our report till now, that we might obtain more detailed information as to the result.

"Wheat may amount to about an average quantity; the quality is of all grades, from fine to very inferior, the medium however preponderates; the whole is sound and wholesome. The weights are from 54, 58, 60, 62, and 63 lb. per bushel.

"Oats are upon the whole a full average quantity, but are very various in quality and condition: those grown upon the coast are bright, heavy, and handsome; while the produce of the high country, though sound, and of tolerable colour, is mixed with greens, and extremely damp and light. They are all weights from 35, 38, 40, 42, 43, and 44 lb. per bushel.

"Potatoes are a good crop as regards quantity; they have been affected by the disease throughout the whole of this district, but in a greater or lesser degree; those raised early and put into pits without ventilation went rapidly to decay, but such as were taken up later, and where proper precautions were taken in storing them, have kept much better, and the disease among them is not making rapid progress. We have, in the meantime, abundance of good quality for human food, and we have reason to believe that that will be the case till spring. The decayed ones make good cattle feed.

"In the counties north of us, the corn crops generally are fully better than in this quarter; and in Aberdeen, Banff, Moray, Ross, and Sutherland shires potatoes are little if at all affected.

"Just before harvest our stocks of grain here were very limited indeed. The disease in the potatoes and the very unfavourable weather, gave such an impulse to the market as has since attracted large supplies, both home and foreign, so much so that, notwithstanding the considerable sales which were effected, we are now so completely choked, that granary room is not to be found, and we think a considerable portion of still expected arrivals from abroad will have to go to other ports."

Good heavens, Sir! what a description of a country of famine! so completely choked that granary room is not to be found!!

"The quantity of grain in bond here consists of about 65,000 qrs. of wheat, 17,000 qrs. of barley, and 4,000 qrs. of oats, besides which we have about 40,000 to 45,000 qrs. of home wheat, chiefly very fine old English.

And pray listen again to this, Sir:—

"In fact, in place of the general outcry of 'famine,' we are literally labouring under repletion."

Literally they say, Sir, labouring under repletion.

"To the quantity of wheat under bond, about 20,000 qrs., still on the passage, will soon be added, besides, a considerable quantity of barley and other grain."

From the circular just read, it then appears that the potato crop was good as regarded Scotland generally—that there was an abundance of potatoes of good quality for human food. I would ask then—was there any ground to change the whole policy of the country on such a miserable pretence of famine as this? It would appear from this document, that, so far from their being any just ground for an outcry on the subject of famine, they were literally labouring under repletion. Sir, I have now done with Scotland, and I trust, sufficiently disposed of the unfounded pretence of a famine in Scotland. I will now see how this matter of famine stood in England. Sir, in the month of December last, I saw a letter from a gentleman in Liverpool, whose name I think would be entitled to no little weight in this House—the letter was signed "John Robertson Gladstone;" and what did it say, Sir? It said the outcry about famine was all a mistake, as, at that time, there were not less than 200 warehouses in Liverpool as cramful of grain as they could hold. One more statement, and so far as regards the wheat famine I have done. Sir, on the 5th of January, 1845, a year admitted by all to be a year of extraordinary abundance, the stock of wheat and wheat flour in the United Kingdom, amounted to 437,193 quarters, whilst in London it did not exceed 153,008 quarters—whilst on the cor-

responding day of the present year, when you tell us there is a famine, there were bonded in the United Kingdom, no less a quantity than 1,079,030 quarters of wheat and wheat flour; whilst in the city of London alone there were in granary under bond 418,422 quarters of wheat and wheat flour; being in this year of famine a quantity within a few thousand quarters, equal to the entire quantity in bond in the whole of the United Kingdom in the preceding year, which you all admit to have been a year of extraordinary abundance. But we are told by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, "that bread was rapidly rising to the war prices." Why, Sir, was ever such an unfounded statement made in this House? Bread rapidly rising to the war prices! Bread at a famine price? Why, Sir, in the war in the year 1801, bread was selling for 11*d.*; not the four pounds, but the two-pound loaf. Eleven pence for two pounds! Whilst I find, in the last week, these two statements as to the prices of bread in London and in Liverpool:—

"Price of bread this week.—The highest price of bread in the Metropolis is 9*d.* the 4lb. loaf; some bakers, however, sell 2*d.* below that rate." "Price of bread and potatoes in Liverpool.—In this part of England, where every article of food is as dear, if not dearer, than in any other town in the kingdom, potatoes have fallen in price, within the last few days, from 4*s.* to 3*s.* per measure of 90 lbs. weight, and the 4lb. loaf of excellent wheaten bread from 7*d.* to 6*d.*"—*Liverpool Mail.*

Why, Sir, if I do not err greatly, the price of the 4 lb. loaf was 10*d.* in 1841, when we turned out the Whig Government for proposing so low a protection as an 8*s.* fixed duty, and it had actually risen to 10½*d.* a short while before the right hon. Boronet the First Minister of the Crown introduced his Bill of 1842, which is now the law of the land; and yet I cannot for my life recollect that either he or my right hon. Friend, in the course of those discussions, spoke even of 10½*d.* as a famine price. But my right hon. Friend says, the law of 1842 has failed, inasmuch as when it was wanted the sliding-scale refused to slide. Sir, I think I have shown good reason why it would not slide, in the exposure that was made in the course of the month of December, of—I can't call it the "great fact," another monosyllable would be more applicable—of the alleged famine in the land. The right hon. Baronet has taunted us with being unwilling to listen to the history of famine in Ireland; he said that it appeared to us a matter which was distasteful—["No!"]—that it was distasteful to many Gentlemen on this side of the House. I beg leave on the part of my hon. Friends to say, that what was distasteful to us, was not the length of the details; but it appeared to us that the right hon. Baronet did not tell us the whole truth. That was what was distasteful to us, and not the length of the details. ["Hear!"] Sir, I trust the House will allow me to proceed. I can assure the House that, tedious as I know and feel that I must be, possessing neither wit nor talents to enliven the debate, there is no Member in this House, however wearied he may be with listening to me, who feels that weariness so painfully as I feel the obligation of being the cause of it. Nothing but the most imperative sense of duty could have induced me to come forward on this occasion to trespass upon the valuable time of this House. Nothing but the circumstance of those who advocate the same principles with myself having been abandoned by our leaders, could have induced me to undertake a task so distasteful to me. I think, having sat eighteen years in this House, and never once having trespassed upon its time before in any one single great debate, I may appeal to the past as a proof that I duly weigh the very small measure of my abilities, and that I am painfully conscious of my proper place in this House; that I feel deeply how unworthy I am of the indulgence of which I have already received so large a portion, and that nothing but an emergency such as this could have dragged me out to intrude upon the time of a House so replete on every side with men of such very far superior talents, abilities, and eloquence to myself. I beg leave to say that though this debate has now continued for three weeks, I am the first Gentleman who has at all entered into the real state of the case as regards the allegation of a potato famine in Ireland, upon which, be it remembered, is founded the sole case of Her Majesty's Ministers for a repeal of the Corn Laws. ["Hear!"] Well, I may be mistaken; but as far as I can recollect the debate, I am the only Gentleman who has taken a practical view of the pretended potato famine in Ireland. They have told us that there is a great calamity impending over Ireland. I do not believe it; but let them prove to us that it is so, and I will venture to say for those that sit around me, that they will be behind no gentlemen in England in render-

ing every assistance to the sister kingdom. We have, however, been told a good deal of the extent of the potato disease in Ireland; but what does my noble Friend the Marquis of Clanricarde say on the subject? He is a resident landlord in the county of Galway, and is himself a cultivator of potatoes. Well, he told me a short time since that the reports had been greatly exaggerated—that he had himself grown 140 acres of potatoes, and that certainly here and there there were a few diseased potatoes to be found, but not so many as to occasion any particular notice to be taken of it, had it not been for the great alarm and clamour that had been previously got up on the subject, chiefly by Her Majesty's Ministers encouraging the panic, and sending their potato-famine Commissioners to Ireland.

"I firmly believe," said my noble Friend, "that one-half of the mischief has been created by the sending of these very learned Commissioners to Ireland, who began their absurd recommendations by advising that all the potatoes should be dug before they were ripe."

Common sense might have told them how pernicious a course that was; every practical man knowing that the inevitable consequence of lifting and storing potatoes before they are ripe is, that the potatoes would all decay. The next thing they did was to recommend the application of artificial heat—viz., "kiln-drying the potatoes." I believe, however sound potatoes may be, it is impossible to devise any more certain specific for making them rot than kiln-drying them. I myself witnessed the result of some experiments made by the Duke of Portland at Welbeck, and whilst those potatoes which had had been cured with magnesian quick-lime, and those which had been cured with charcoal ashes, after being pitted six weeks, proved as sound as the day they were pitted, when the learned Professor's pit, the kiln-dried potato pit was opened, I can assure this House that it smoked up like a dunghill, the potatoes cured according to the recipe of Her Majesty's Ministers and their learned professors, was one entire mass of corruption. But that was not all the mischief that the Government and their learned Commissioners had done, for they created such a panic about these potatoes, that the people were not only induced, in the hope of saving a portion of them, to rush upon the trial of those suggested methods that proved their destruction, but, from fear of the rot, they hastened to consume their potatoes in every possible way; in the language of the peasantry of Galway, "to destroy them," that was, to give them lavishly away to pigs and cattle, not then wanting them, in short, to anything that would eat them. My noble Friend told me that from the great excitement that prevailed, even he was himself induced to give them to his pigs and cattle, and even his horses, in fact to dispose of them in any and every way by which he could get them used; before—as he was induced to think—the disease should affect them all; and this all proceeded from the panic caused by sending these Commissioners into Ireland. We are told by Her Majesty's Ministers that there are four millions of the Irish people on the brink of famine: I, therefore, wish to ask Her Majesty's Ministers what provision they have made for those four millions of poor people? If they honestly believe that there will be four millions of people requiring support for three months, they must know that it will require a million quarters of grain to feed them. They believe no such thing. But we are told that the order they have sent to the United States for maize to supply their wants, is limited to one hundred thousand quarters, which would afford subsistence during three months, not for four millions, which they say are on the brink of starvation, but only for a tenth part of that number, that is to say, for four hundred thousand. I would, therefore, be glad to know if Her Majesty's Government really believe that there will be four millions of people depending upon them for relief for the space of time I have mentioned, how they intend to supply the deficiency? Is it not quite clear that to serve their purposes here they have exaggerated tenfold the extent of the calamity which in their hearts they believe to exist? But what says our own great Duke—England's great Duke—on this subject? The Duke of Wellington tells you, "that he saw no reason for opening the ports, inasmuch as whenever a deficiency should appear, prices would rise, and, under the existing law, the ports would open themselves." And with regard to Ireland he tells you, "that although there has been a great loss of potatoes, and there must ensue, in consequence, considerable privation to a great portion of the people of Ireland; from all accounts there is no ground for believing that there is any danger of an absolute deficiency of food in Ireland." It is five weeks ago this day, that the Member for

Somersetshire moved for a return of the highest price of potatoes in each of the last seven years in each of all the market towns in Ireland; but that return has not yet been produced. I want to know why it is kept back?—why are we kept in the dark? The right hon. Baronet the First Minister of the Crown has told you that wheat has at this time an import duty of 17*s.* a quarter upon it, and nothing on earth could induce him to come to the people of England to ask them to pay that price for the purpose of feeding the people of Ireland; but I believe that the right hon. Baronet never intended to feed them with wheat, but with maize or oats. I am sure hon. Gentlemen will be rather surprised when I tell them that in January last there were 100,000 quarters of oats imported into this country from Ireland—a quantity corresponding exactly to the Government contract for maize from the United States as a provision for the starving people of Ireland. Well, then, I ask, ought not common sense to have taught the Government the propriety of purchasing these Irish oats, thereby conferring a double benefit upon the people of that country? In the first place, they would have been paying the Irish people for the produce of their land; and in the next place, they would have had the supply ready at hand when and where the scarcity required it. As I understand, the poorer classes of the people of Ireland generally cultivate one acre perhaps of oats, and two of potatoes; the oats are grown on the same land only once in three years; it is upon the potatoes that they generally depend for their food; and they sell their oats to pay their rent, and to supply perhaps some other few necessaries and comforts of life; therefore, had the Government adopted the course I mention, it would, as I said before, have conferred a double benefit on that country. The right hon. Baronet gave us an account of a London provision dealer who went a tour into Kent, and after visiting the gardens in Kent returned by the railway, and as he was whirled along in the train looked out of the window of his railway carriage and saw the potatoes looked black; he read us also a letter from Yorkshire, written by a Mr. Wood, whom nobody knows. I happen to know something about Yorkshire. But I want to know why, instead of the letter of this Mr. Wood, the right hon. Gentleman did not favour us with the opinions, which I presume he must have learnt, of my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, the seconder of the Address, upon this subject of the potato disease in Yorkshire? My hon. Friend tells me, that in the month of December he called upon my late lamented Friend, Lord Wharncliffe, himself the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, himself too a Cabinet Minister, and told him that there was no foundation for the cry of famine as regarded the state of the potato crop in Yorkshire. Now, Sir, as this was not a private or confidential communication, it is hardly to be supposed my late lamented Friend, Lord Wharncliffe, would keep it back from Her Majesty's Ministers; and, if not, I must beg leave to ask, when Mr. Wood's letter was communicated, how came the information from my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding to be kept back from this House? I shall now go to Ireland. We have heard a great many statements as to the disease of the potato in Ireland; statements from police, and from inspectors of police, as well as from various other quarters. But, Sir, I must take leave to ask, what has become of the reports of the Lieutenants of the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny? My noble Friend the Member for Derby is Lieutenant of the county of Carlow, and he made a report to the Irish Government; and the Lieutenant of the county of Kilkenny made a report to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Bessborough, long a Cabinet Minister, is the Lieutenant of the county of Kilkenny; and I will ask if there is any man in England or in Ireland whose opinion, on account of his business-like habits, of his great practical knowledge, and the warm and affectionate interest which for a long period of years he has ever taken in everything which concerns the true interests of Ireland, and more especially of the peasantry of Ireland—is there any man whose opinion could have had greater weight? Is there any man whose opinion would have been so willingly listened to by this House or by the country, either in England or in Ireland, as that of the Earl of Bessborough upon an Irish subject? Well, Sir, I am assured—and I appeal for the truth of my statement to my noble Friend the Member for Derby—that the Earl of Bessborough took the greatest possible pains to ascertain the truth—to ascertain the real state of the case as regards the failure of the potato crop in Ireland; and, having done so, made an elaborate report to the Irish

Government. Well, then, I desire to know why Lord Bessborough's report to the Irish Government is suppressed? Is it because Lord Bessborough told both sides of the story, and that his report would not assist the present policy of Her Majesty's Ministers? I can also appeal to my noble Friend the Member for and Lieutenant of the county of Down; my noble Friend made his report to the Irish Government. Why have we not had laid before us the report of my noble Friend the Lieutenant of the great county of Down? Then, again, there is my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the county of Antrim, who was canvassing the county of Antrim throughout the month of December, and, feeling a deep interest in the prospects of the Irish people, lost no opportunity of making every possible inquiry as to the true state of the potato crop; and my hon. and gallant Friend has assured me that the invariable answer he received was—"We have here and there a bad one, but we have no fault to find with the potato crop." Sir, I can also appeal to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chatham as an evidence in proof of the undiseased state of the potato crop in the county of Roscommon in December last. It was a little before Christmas last year, that after having witnessed the result of several experiments tried under the directions of the Duke of Portland at Welbeck with diseased potatoes, thinking I might be of service to Ireland, I wrote to my right hon. Friend, who was then staying at Lord Crofton's in the county of Roscommon, the results of those experiments; and first, I had to tell him of the disastrous results of those modes of cure especially recommended by certain learned professors sent to Ireland by Her Majesty's Ministers; the invariable effect of the application of artificial heat, of "kiln drying," as recommended originally by these learned professors, was, that the potatoes one and all became rotten! Sir, I myself witnessed, and so I wrote to my right hon. Friend then in Roscommon, the opening of the pit cured according to the prescription of those learned professors; and I can assure the House when "the professor's pit" was opened, it steamed up like an opened dunghill, such was the state of putrefaction in which it was in. Anxious to communicate to my right hon. Friend any information that I deemed might be useful to Ireland, I wrote to him an account of the experiments which appeared to me to be most successful, and more especially of an experiment made with magnesian quicklime, which seemed in every way to be entirely and pre-eminently successful. But what was my right hon. Friend's reply? "Much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken; but there is no potato disease in Roscommon." Sir, again I can appeal to my right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Admiralty and a Member for the county of Tyrone, who only returned from Ireland from the county of Tyrone on the 1st of January. He will tell the House that potatoes were then in Ireland only 3*d.* per stone. In like manner, I can appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for the Queen's County. He assures me, that potatoes at this time are only $2\frac{3}{4}d.$ per stone in the principal markets of the Queen's County, though here and there in the mountainous districts, the potatoes may have entirely failed. Well, Lord de Vesci, the father of my hon. Friend, is Lord Lieutenant for the Queen's County, and he, too, made a report to the Irish Government. Why have we not that report? But how can it be honestly, or with truth, affirmed that there is famine in the land, with potatoes at no more than 3*d.* and 4*d.* a stone? Why, good God! when Mr. Burke wrote of scarcity in 1794, potatoes were 5*s.* a bushel; and, upon looking at Mr. Tooke's prices, I find that the average price of potatoes in the whole of the cotton manufacturing districts of England, during eleven years, from 1810 to 1820, both inclusive, averaged $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ per stone, whilst the highest price mounted up to $17\frac{1}{2}d.$ per stone, and the lowest price was $5\frac{3}{5}d.$; and, depend upon it, the money price is always the best criterion of the crop. Sir, I now come to the great challenge which is ever and anon put forth by the Anti-Corn-Law League, and now by their disciples, Her Majesty's Ministers. How are we, they ask, with our limited extent of territory, to feed a population annually and rapidly increasing, at the rate of 300,000 a year, as generally stated by the hon. Member for Stockport—a rate increased by my noble Friend the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire to a 1,000 a day, or 365,000 a year. Sir, I will meet the hon. Gentleman and my noble Friend, as well as Her Majesty's Ministers, upon this ground, and I will undertake to show not only that for the last five and forty years the produce of the land has outstripped the growth of the

population; but that there is ample scope without even any new discoveries in the science of agriculture, for a continued excess of production over population, at all events for the next twenty years to come. I will first examine the past. I find, Sir, that the population of England and Wales, which in 1801 amounted to 8,872,980, rose to 10,150,615 in 1811, being an increase of 14½ per cent upon the first period; and that by 1821 it had grown to 11,978,875, being a further increase of 17½ per cent; the aggregate increase on the twenty years amounting to 3,105,895. Sir, you will now expect me to furnish my proofs wherein this immense growth of the population was provided for; these are my proofs. I find that the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat in 1813 to inquire into the state of the corn trade, of which I believe Sir H. Parnell was the chairman, stated in their Report—

"That through the extension of, and improvements in cultivation, the agricultural produce of the kingdom had been increased one-fourth during the ten years preceding the time of their enquiry."

Sir, the House will recollect that during the same period the population had increased not one-fourth, but 14½ per cent, which is only a fraction above one-seventh. But, Sir, if there were any doubt about this fact, I might triumphantly refer to the number of Inclosure Bills, and to the number of acres of waste lands brought into cultivation during the exciting period of the war prices, when wheat averaged nearly 100*s.* a quarter. Sir, I find by a reference to Parliamentary documents, that between the twenty years from 1801 to 1821, no less than 1,677 Inclosure Bills were passed for the inclosure and reclamation of no less than 3,068,910 acres of land, being an average of 83 Inclosure Acts, and an average of 153,445 acres a year. I have before stated that the aggregate increase of the population during the same period was 3,105,895; the House, therefore, will observe, that since 1801 and up to 1821, for every new mouth born there was as near as possible a new acre of land brought into cultivation. Sir, I must now proceed to the period between 1821 and 1845. Prices fell after 1820. In 1822, wheat fell to 43*s.* a quarter, and the rage for inclosures correspondingly diminished. I find, from 1821 to 1835 inclusive, the average number of Inclosure Bills greatly fell off, and so, of course, did the new acreage brought into cultivation. The total number of Inclosure Acts in those fifteen years amounted to no more than 262, and the acreage reclaimed to 442,860, showing an average of about sixteen Inclosure Bills, taking in 29,524 acres a year. In the last ten years there occurred a still further decrease in these respects, the Inclosure Acts in the last ten years amounting in the aggregate to only 150, or 15 a year. I do not know the number of acres included in the inclosures during this last period; but the whole shows a sad falling-off, subsequent to the fall in the price of wheat, as compared with the period of war prices. It may be as well to state also, in passing, that the average of the last four years since the last modification of the Corn Laws, show only an annual average of eleven Drainage and Inclosure Acts. Sir, having failed under continually falling prices to give you evidence of new lands brought into cultivation, so as to keep pace with the growing population of the country from 1821 to 1844, I must look elsewhere for evidences of an increased growth of corn; and I am happy to say I readily find it in the improved cultivation of the land. The population of England and Wales, which was 11,978,875 in 1821, in 1831 had increased to 13,089,338, being an increase on 1821 of 16 per cent; in 1841, it further increased to 14,995,508, or 14 per cent on 1831: estimating this increase, or something like it, to have continued to 1844, and assuming the population in 1844 to have grown to 15,662,274, the gross increase of population in 1844, as compared with 1821, would be something under 32 per cent. I must, therefore, turn to the improved cultivation of the soil of England, and see what has been going on there to meet this prolific increase of the population. Well, Sir, I find that in 1821, in his evidence before the Agricultural Distress Committee, Mr. Wakefield—an authority universally quoted by all great writers on agricultural statistics—Mr. Wakefield computed the average produce of all the wheat lands in England, at no more than seventeen bushels per acre. But in 1840 Mr. M'Culloch was of opinion that the produce of the wheat lands of England had been raised on an average to twenty-six bushels per acre, whilst in 1844 Mr. M'Gregor estimates that such had been the rapid improvement in the science of agriculture, and in the cultivation of the soil, that the average produce of wheat throughout England and Wales had mounted up to twenty-

eight bushels per acre. What then is the result of this comparative statement of the growth of the population with the growth of corn to feed them between 1821 and the year 1844? The results are, that whilst the population increased at the rate of less than 32 per cent, the growth of wheat has, during the same period, increased no less than 64 per cent. Sir, it may be asked if such is the increased produce of wheat, as compared with the population—how comes it that we are still, to a certain extent as regards bread corn, an importing nation? I rejoice to think that it is to be accounted for in the universally improved condition and the enlarged command of food by the working classes of the people. Sir, I have myself, in the course of this evening, shown to you, that the taste of the people of Scotland, through increased affluence, has, throughout the manufacturing towns of that kingdom, in a considerable degree, changed from oaten to wheaten bread. You have heard the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade affirm, that the consumption of bread in this metropolis has been 10 per cent higher in the last year than in any previous year; but we have still higher authority for this gratifying belief in Mr. Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, wherein, after contrasting the duration of life in England as compared with other countries, showing, that whilst in Sweden and Denmark the average number of deaths is 1 in 48; in Holland, it is 1 in 43; in France, 1 in 40; in the United States, 1 in 37; in Prussia, 1 in 36; and in Wurtemburg, 1 in 33; in England—in happy England, it is only 1 in 59; he goes on to show, that in England and Wales, in 1800, the deaths were 1 in 47; in 1811, 1 in 53; and in 1831, 1 in 58; now, 1 in 59; Mr. Porter accounts for this continually diminishing mortality, this improvement of health, and prolongation of life, by the vast amendment in the condition of the people; the less crowded state of their dwellings; the superiority and cheapness of their clothing; to better medical assistance; greater personal cleanliness, and, above all, to the increased command of better kinds of food. Sir, my noble Friend the Member for the city of London has more than once denounced "protection as the bane of agriculture." In the history of my noble Friend's illustrious family, I should have thought he would have read a remarkable refutation of such notions as these. Immortalized as is the name of that noble family in the brightest pages of English history, for its great deeds and sacrifices paid to liberty and to patriotism; for its valour in the field and its distinction in the councils of the nation; it is scarcely more distinguished in these respects, than it has been for its gigantic and patriotic works in the wonderful improvements in the agriculture of the country, during the reign of protection. I should have thought that no Member of the House of Russell could have forgotten that it was under the influence and encouragement of protection, that Francis Earl of Bedford, and his fellow adventurers, drained and reclaimed the fens, bringing 300,000 acres of land drowned in water into cultivation, and thus converting into fertile fields a vast morass, extending over twenty square miles and seven counties in England. Still more, I should have thought my noble Friend would not have forgotten that, emulating the good deeds and great works of his illustrious ancestor, John Duke of Bedford, the father of my noble Friend, at a cost of 300,000*l.* within these twenty years carried out those mighty operations upon the rive Nene, whereby at once the navigation of that great and important trading river was wonderfully improved, and the agricultural produce of the immense tracts of land drained by the Nene more than doubled; and all this under the influence and encouragement of protection. In like manner my noble Friend might have remembered that in 1818, running parallel, and within seven or eight miles of the Nene, under the auspices of a lamented relative of mine, the late Lord William Bentinck, at an expense of 600,000*l.* the Eau Brinck Cut, and those other works for the improvement of the outfall of the Ouze, were executed, whereby the agricultural produce of 300,000 acres of fen lands drained through the Ouze, must likewise have been nearly doubled: all these great works being lasting monuments, not of the folly, but of the wisdom of protection to British agriculture. Sir, the year 1845 alone remains to be accounted for; but I think I shall have no difficulty in showing, setting aside all other improvements in agriculture, that by the importation and application to the land of guano alone, there must have been an increase in the produce of the land far more than equivalent to even the 365,000 additional mouths assumed to have been born, by my noble Friend the Member for the West Riding,

in 1845. Sir, we are informed that in the year 1845 no less a quantity than 280,000 tons of guano, at an expense to the farmers of somewhere about 2,000,000*l.* sterling, were imported into this country; that of this 200,000 tons, or in other words, 4,000,000 cwt., were last year expended upon the land. Of this I will assume that one half would be applied to the growth of wheat, and the other half to the growth of turnips, preparatory to next year's wheat crop. To begin then with wheat. According to the experiments tried and recorded in the *Royal Agricultural Journal*, it would seem, that by the application of two hundred weight of guano to an acre of wheat land, the produce would be increased by one quarter per acre. At this rate a hundred thousand tons, or 2,000,000 cwt. of guano, would add 1,000,000 quarters of wheat to the crop, or bread for one year for 1,000,000 of people. But to be quite sure not to exceed a correct estimate, I will assume that it would require three hundred weight of guano to an acre to produce an extra quarter of wheat. According to this estimate, one hundred thousand tons of guano applied to the land in 1845, must have added 666,666 quarters of grain to the wheat crop, or, in other words, bread for 666,666 additional mouths. Now for turnips; Mr. Everitt, of South Creake, near Fakenham, in Norfolk, has, in like manner, proved that two cwt. of guano will add ten tons per acre to the turnip crop. But again, for fear of exaggeration, I will suppose that three cwt. per acre would be requisite to create such increased fertility—in this case 2,000,000 cwt. of guano would add 6,666,660 tons of turnips to the natural unmanured produce of the crop. I believe it is generally considered that one ton of Swede turnips would last twenty sheep three weeks; and that each sheep should gain half a pound of meat per week, or one pound and a half in three weeks; thus, twenty sheep feeding on one ton of turnips in three weeks should, in the aggregate, make, as the graziers say, thirty pounds of mutton. But, to be quite sure to be under the mark, I will assume that one ton of turnips will only make half this amount of mutton; multiply, then, 6,666,660 by 15, and you have no less than 99,999,900 lbs. of mutton as the fruits of 100,000 tons of guano; which, at ninety-two pounds per man—which is the average Englishman's allowance—or, in other words, meat, mutton, for 1,860,955 —nearly 2,000,000 of people. Such, Sir, will have been the produce of the last year's crops, made luxuriant by the application of guano; but after the turnip crop, fed off by sheep, as a necessary consequence, would follow a productive crop of spring corn in 1846; added to which, it will be recollected, that I said before that there remained of the 280,000 tons of guano imported in 1845, 80,000 tons, as stock in hand for the coming year of 1846. ["Divide, divide!" "Hear, hear!"] Well, but you have challenged us to show how we could feed the people: will you not now allow me to reply to your challenge? God knows, if you had not taunted us, and thrown out this challenge, I would not have troubled you. You have challenged me to show how the agricultural interest could provide food for the people under the protective system. I have answered your challenge, and, as I think, have triumphantly shown you that this country possesses the power of feeding its population, and, under the influence and encouragement of protection, has fed its population, as I will show you, better than the people of any other country of Europe are fed. Well, Sir, I have shown you that we have most successfully fed the growing population of this country up to the present time; that, under the influence of protection, the agricultural produce of the country in a remarkable manner has outstripped, and continues to outstrip, the growth of the population; it remains for me to show that there exist the means and the scope for its continuing to do so. Sir, these means exist in the still remaining wastes in Great Britain, and more especially in Ireland, which are stated to be capable of being brought into profitable cultivation. Sir, I find in Mr. Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, which I have already quoted, this estimate of waste lands thus remaining waiting for cultivation :—

	Statute Acres.
England	3,454,000
Wales	530,000
Scotland	5,950,000
Ireland	4,900,000
British Isles	166,000
Total	15,000,000

Sir, assuming that in the course of the next twenty years, these fifteen million acres of wastes should be brought into cultivation, and that they be made to produce the present average of England—that is to say, twenty-eight bushels of wheat per acre once in four years—the annual average produce of the lands now waste would, at

the end of the next twenty years, prove equal to the growth of 10,075,000 quarters of wheat, or bread annually for an increased population of 10,075,000 of souls; an estimate of increase which must by all be admitted to be fully equal to any increased growth of the population of the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland that can fairly be expected during the next twenty years. We are told by the hon. Member for Stockport, and by the hon. Member for Durham, that the English are the worst farmers in the world, and that it is absolutely necessary to take away their protection, in order to excite them to exertion, and by exposing them to competition with foreigners, to induce these lazy fellows to exert themselves. I will not fatigue the House by quoting documents, or I could show that England produces, comparatively speaking, much more than France, or even Holland; and I could show you, from the testimony of honourable and high-minded foreign writers, whose authority would not be disputed, and who appear to have more candour, and to possess higher feelings of generosity than some of our own countrymen towards the farmers of England, that in England not only a better system of farming prevails, but that there is a larger produce, compared with the space cultivated, than in any other country in the world. Sir, I might at great length quote the authority of a distinguished French author—I mean, Monsieur le Chevalier Tapiès—in proof of this assertion; but at this late hour of the night, when the House is so wearied, I will only trespass further on its attention, whilst I state that Monsieur le Chevalier Tapiès says, and in this Mr. M'Gregor confirms him, that whilst France only produces on the average 14 bushels of wheat per acre, Great Britain produces 28; and that whilst the cattle, sheep, and pigs in England, even so far back as 1814 (since when the greatest improvement has taken place in the breed of every kind of animal in this country), had doubled in weight since 1710; those of France appear at the present day to be precisely of the same weight with the farming stock of England in 1710. He then gives what he conceives to have been the weight of these animals in England in 1710 and in 1814, as follows:—

1710.	lbs.	1814.
An ox usually weighed...	370	800
A calf.....	50	140
A sheep.....	28	112
A lamb	18	35
A pig	60	84

I may here as well observe, that in 1842, Sir Charles Lemon, a high authority, estimated the average weight of the carcase of an ox at 800 lbs., and those of sheep at 80 lbs. Well, Sir, with all this disparity in size between the cattle, sheep, and pigs of France with those of England, what says M. le Chevalier Tapiès of their comparative numbers? He says—

"England, with a population of 14,000,000, and France, with a population of 32,000,000, produce as follows:—England, 170,000 horses, 1,250,000 oxen, 10,200,000 sheep. In proportion to her numbers, France ought to produce 400,000 horses, 2,520,000 oxen, 24,000,000 sheep; whereas her actual produce is under 100,000 horses, 800,000 oxen, and under 5,300,000 sheep."

The result of all which is, that M. le Chevalier Tapiès' calculates, that if there were to be a dearth of grain in France and in England, that, comparing the riches of each country in cattle with their respective populations, France would be found to possess fresh meat enough to keep her people from starving to death for three months only; whilst the cattle, and sheep, and pigs, of England, would keep her people alive for nearly two years! But what does Monsieur le Chevalier Tapiès say of the comparative improvement in the condition of the two people. He says, that the population of Paris having averaged from 1766 to 1775, 511,000; and 890,000 in 1831, he finds that the consumption of the French metropolis was as follows:—

Years.	Population.	Oxen.	Sheep.
1766 to 1775	511,000	66,000	333,000
1832	890,000	61,000	278,000

Monsieur le Chevalier Tapiès remarks, that a similar diminution in the consumption of animal food is to be remarked in pretty nearly all the towns of the kingdom; showing a considerable diminution of comsumption in the face of a greatly increased population. Now, contrast this retrograde movement in the condition of the people of France, with the consumption of this metropolis. I find in Mr. Spackman's tables the consumption of cattle and sheep in this metropolis to have been in—

Years.	Cattle.	Sheep.
1833	152,093	1,167,820
1842	174,964	1,423,280
Increase...	10,861	255,460

But the falling-off in France is not by any

means confined to animal food. He gives thus the consumption of Paris in other things, comparing now the years 1821, 1822, when the population of Paris was 678,860, with 1831, when it increased to 890,000:—

1821—22. Population 678,860.		1831. Population 890,000.
Sacks of flour.....	679,860	587,940
Cheese, dry lbs. ...	1,348,500	996,369
Wine (Hectolitres)	828,440	776,784
Brandy ditto	42,774	28,573
Beer	148,276	112,359

It does not appear, however, that the condition of France generally has improved since 1830; for it seems that taking the entire of France, her consumption of meat continued to fall off in 1840, as compared with 1830, although, during the same period, her population had increased from 32,569,223, in 1830, to 33,540,910, in 1840. This is the consumption of France, stated in kilogrammes, a kilogramme being equal to two pounds and one-fifth English.

FRANCE.

Population.	Beef and Veal. Kils.	Mutton. Kils.	Total Meat. Kils.	Eng. Weight Equal to lbs.
1830 ... 32,569,223	300,172,965	87,485,622	393,658,587	862,048,891
1840 ... 33,540,910	298,888,995	79,673,321	378,562,316	832,837,095
Diminution in 1840 as compared with 1830.....	7,283,970	7,812,301	15,096,271	29,211,796

Increase of population during same period, 971,687.

The consumption of England and Wales, during the year 1840, exclusive of pork, was, 1,260,336,000 lbs., showing, with a population considerably less than half that of France, an excess of consumption of beef, mutton, and veal, of no less than 427,498,905 lbs.; thus with considerably less than half the number of months, consuming more than half as much again of beef, mutton, and veal, as France. In corroboration of this statement, I find it said in April, 1841, in the Chamber of Peers in France, by M. Cunin Gridain, the Minister of Agriculture in France, that whilst in France the consumption per head is 28 lbs. of beef, veal, and mutton, and 21 lbs. of "*charcuterie*," (which I understand to be pigs' meat); altogether 51 lbs., —he says in England the consumption per head, including "*charcuterie*," is actually 149 lbs. (68 kilogrammes). M. Tapiès further observes that in England the manure expended on the land is nine times that expended upon the land in France. This same impartial historian tells us, moreover, that whilst with our large properties consequent upon the law of primogeniture, in the course of the last fifty years England has knocked down 200,000 miserable cottages, and replaced them by magnificent farm-houses (*batiments ruraux*), in France, with her small divisions of property (*avec la petite culture*), during the same number of years, it is not the cottages but the *chateaux* that have been razed to the ground. I will now turn to Holland, said to be, with the exception of Great Britain, the best cultivated country in the world. Well, what says Mr. M'Gregor of the average produce of the wheat lands in Holland? You will recollect that he estimates the average of England at twenty-eight bushels per acre; the average of Holland he estimates at twenty-three bushels per acre; more than 20 per cent less than England; whilst of her ability to feed the people, and of the fulness with which they are fed, he thus expresses himself:—

"If the labouring population of Holland, instead of eating bread and animal food more sparingly than, perhaps, any other in Europe, were to consume as great a quantity as the French do, the corn produced in all the provinces of the kingdom would not probably be equal to half the consumption."

Now, having already shown, upon the authority of the French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, that the French people can only afford to eat, and do only, upon an average, eat a third part of the meat and pork commonly ate by the average of Englishmen; I do most cordially hope, before it is too late, that the working classes will come forward and say that they do not wish to see those protective laws to British agriculture, under which they have fared so well compared to their neighbours of France and Holland,

hastily done away with. Well then, if there is no country in Europe which can compare in the science or enterprise in agriculture with English and Scottish farmers, perhaps it is in America that you can find our rivals and our superiors: if you think so, pray hearken to what a noble-minded and generous American says of his British rivals. Mr. Wadsworth, who for the generous mention he makes of the people of this country, would do honour to the chivalry of the British ancestry from which he is sprung, in a speech delivered at a meeting of an agricultural association of which he is the president, held three years ago in the State of New York, delivered himself of these memorable sentiments:—

"It has been our fate to meet the English on the battle field and upon the ocean, and whenever we have met the results of the contest have been such that neither party has had need to be ashamed; but there is now a more appropriate field of action, that field which the ploughshare furrows; and when we reflect, that whilst England makes her land produce forty bushels of wheat per acre, whilst America can only produce fifteen, we may well acknowledge, 'that England is pretty hard to whip, meet her where we may.'"

Now, Sir, when disinterested foreigners bear such important and honourable witness as this to our great superiority in farming, I do think it is not a little hard that our own countrymen, manufacturers chiefly, knowing nothing themselves of the science of agriculture, should take upon themselves to hold up to public contempt the agriculturists of England, as being the very worst, instead of what, in truth, they are, the very best farmers in the world. Sir, there is one point with regard to the comparative value of wages in France and in England, which I have omitted, but which with the leave of the House I will state. ["Divide, divide!"] Sir, it is the poor of whom I am going to speak. You pretend to be the friends of the poor; will you not hear me when I address myself to the interests of the working classes? Sir, Monsieur le Chevalier Tapiès, after noticing that the average price of wheat for the previous eleven years in England had been 56*s.* 6*d.* and in France 39*s.* 7*d.*, proceeds to discuss the question whether the labourer in England with his 21*d.* per day (*i. e.* 10*s.* 6*d.* per week), or the French labourer in his own country with his wages at 12½*d.* a day, are best off in their respective countries; when he comes to the conclusion that the Englishman is very considerably better off. He shows first, that notwithstanding the comparatively low price of wheat in France, it takes the labourer in France fifteen days and a quarter to earn a hectolitre of wheat; whilst in England, with his higher rate of wages, and much higher price of wheat, it will only take him eleven days and three-tenths; in other words, at the respective prices of wages and bread in their own countries, it would take a Frenchman thirty-eight days' labour, and an Englishman only twenty-eight days and a quarter to earn a quarter of wheat; but, as an Englishman in other regards is one-fifth better fed than a Frenchman, it takes an Englishman but eighty-four days and three-quarters work to purchase his subsistence; whilst it takes a Frenchman ninety-one and a half days' work to procure his. Thus, says Monsieur de Tapiès, "there is an immense difference in the lot of the two workmen, to the advantage of the Englishman, in whose food, meat, beer, tea, and sugar abounds; whilst in that of the Frenchman, it only enters as a rare luxury. Those, therefore," says this French writer, "commit a great error, who advance the doctrine that the English people are a miserable people, as regards their system of subsistence, and their means of paying for it." My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the 10th of June last, in resisting the Motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, for the repeal of the Corn Laws, emphatically declared that the inevitable effect of such a measure would be—

"To throw two millions of acres of the most ancient land in England out of cultivation, and that the consequence must necessarily be to throw the 500,000, or 800,000 persons dependent upon their cultivation out of employment, stopping the whole machine of State, and reducing these unfortunate people to pauperism, to beggary, to destitution, and despair."

I wish to ask Her Majesty's Ministers, if such fatal and sad consequences as these are to arise out of the very measures which they are pretending to bring forward as an alleviation of the sufferings of the poor, how they reconcile these antagonist doctrines? If you, the Ministers, honestly wish to afford relief to the labouring classes, why instead of taking off the protecting duties on British agriculture and British industry of every description —why, instead of removing the Customs' duties, none of them prohibitory, scarcely any of them exceeding 30 per cent, *ad valorem*, on those articles, which come into competition with the industry of Englishmen, of Scotchmen, and of Irishmen,

whether engaged in agriculture, in manufactures, or in handicrafts—why, instead of remitting the Customs' duties upon the produce and manufactures of those countries which maintain against you the most stringent and prohibitory tariffs, do you not apply yourselves to the reduction of other Customs' duties on articles that do not come into competition with domestic industry, but are, not less than corn, or than timber, or than silk manufactures, articles not of luxury only, but almost of absolute necessity, to the poor? Take, for example, sugar or rice, or above all tea: tea has become almost as great a necessary of life, especially to the female portion of the working classes, as bread itself; and how does the matter stand as regards tea? Tea would come into competition with no article of domestic produce or domestic industry. The introduction of cheap tea would injure no one, and benefit all. The tax on tea is not some 25 or 30 per cent upon the value, as are those on corn, on timber, on silk manufactures, and other articles, but actually 250 per cent upon the cost of the tea. The cost price of the tea is only 10*d.* per lb., the tax you put upon it is 2*s.* 2¼*d.* per lb.; that is, 250 per cent on the produce of China; 250 per cent upon the produce of the Chinese, who take all your manufactures, charging you not prohibitory duties, not extortionate duties, as you are charged in Prussia, in Russia, in Germany, in France, and in the United States, whose produce and manufactures you are going to admit free of duty, or at almost nominal duties; but charging you a duty not exceeding 6½ per cent, *ad valorem*, upon your manufactures. Take, for example, a consignment of grey woollen cloth: say the merchant's transaction shall be one of 20*l.*, viz., forty pieces of grey cloth, measuring twenty yards the piece, at 6*d.* per yard, or 10*s.* per piece; the Chinese charge you with a duty of 15 cents, or 7½*d.* a piece, on these grey cloth goods: the Chinese duty will be exactly 1*l.* 5*s.* The Chinaman pays your merchant back with 480 lbs. of tea, which, at 10*d.* per lb., comes exactly to 20*l.*, the valuation of the forty pieces of grey woollen cloth; but your duty, at 2*s.* 2¼*d.* per lb., comes to the enormous sum of 52*l.* 10*s.*, on an article of exactly the same value with that on which these liberal Chinese only charge you 1*l.* 5*s.* Sir, I am at a total loss to discover any principle in this, unless it is a fixed principle with Her Majesty's Ministers to deal with nations as they deal with parties in this House and in the country, the principle of cringing to their enemies, and of maltreating and bullying their best, their truest, and their staunchest friends. But there is yet another consideration; the Americans are your rivals with their manufactures in the markets of China; the Americans, wiser than you, admit the tea of their good and liberal customers in China free of duty. Take care, with the ill-advised, ill-assorted, ill-conditioned policy you are now pursuing, you do not alienate from yourselves, and transfer to the United States, the goodwill of the Chinese and their Government, and lose a market that numbers three hundred millions of people. Sir, one more word before I have done. We have heard in the course of these discussions a good deal about "a limited monarchy, a reformed House of Commons, and a proud aristocracy." Sir, with regard to our limited monarchy, I have no observation to make; but, if so humble an individual as myself might be permitted to whisper a word in the ear of that illustrious and royal Personage, who, as he stands nearest, so is he justly dearest, to Her who sits upon the throne, I would take leave to say, that I cannot but think he listened to ill advice, when, on the first night of this great discussion, he allowed himself to be seduced by the First Minister of the Crown to come down in this House to usher in, to give *éclat*, and, as it were, by reflection from the Queen, to give the semblance of the personal sanction of Her Majesty to a measure which, be it for good or for evil, a great majority at least of the landed aristocracy of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland, imagine will be fraught with deep injury, if not ruin, to them—a measure which, not confined in its operation to this great class, is calculated to grind down countless smaller interests engaged in the domestic trades and industry of this Empire, transferring the profits of all these interests—English, Scotch, Irish, and Colonial—great and small alike, from Englishmen, from Scotchmen, and from Irishmen, to Americans, to Frenchmen, to Russians, to Poles, to Prussians, and to Germans. Sir, I come now to the reformed House of Commons; and, as one who was a party to that great measure, I cannot but feel a deep interest in its success, and more especially in that portion of it commonly called the Chandos clause; but originating, I believe, with my hon.

and gallant Friend the Member for Lincoln, which extended the franchise to the largest and most respectable body in this kingdom —I mean the landed tenantry of England; and deeply should I regret should any large proportion of those Members who have been sent to Parliament to represent them in this House, prove to be the men to bring lasting dishonour alike upon themselves, their constituencies, and this House, by an act of tergiversation so gross as to be altogether unprecedented in the annals of any reformed or unreformed House of Commons. Sir, lastly, I come to the "proud aristocracy." We are a "proud aristocracy;" but, if we are proud, it is that we are proud in the chastity of our honour; if we assisted in 1841, in turning the Whigs out of office, for that we did not consider a fixed duty of 8*s.* a quarter on foreign corn a sufficient protection, it was with honesty of purpose and in single-mindedness that we did so; and, as we were not, before the fact, we will not be accomplices after the fact, in the fraud by which the Whig Ministers were turned out of office. If we are a proud aristocracy, we are proud of our honour, inasmuch as we never have been guilty, and never can be guilty, of double-dealing with the farmers of England—of swindling our opponents, deceiving our friends, or betraying our constituents.

The House then divided:—Ayes 337; Noes 240: Majority 97.

List of the AYES.

Acheson, Lord
Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Anson, Hon. Col.
Attwood, J.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Baird, W.
Baldwin, B.
Bannerman, A.
Barclay, D.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Baring, W. B.
Barnard, E. G.
Barron, Sir H.
Beckett, W.
Benbow, John
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, Capt.
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Bernal, Ralph
Blake, M. J.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Botfield, Beriah
Bouverie, hon. E.
Bowes, John
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Bridgeman, H.
Bright, John
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, R. D.
Browne, Hon. W.
Bruce, Lord Ernest
Buckley, E.
Bulkeley, Sir R.
Buller, Charles
Buller, E.
Busfeild, William
Butler, Col.
Butler, P. S.
Byng, G.
Byng, rt. hon. G.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, hon. R.
Carnegie, Capt.
Cavendish, hon. C.
Cavendish, hon. G.
Chapman, B.
Chichester, Lord
Childers, J. W.
Christie, W. D.
Clay, Sir W.
Clements, Visct.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clive, hon. R.
Cobden, R.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Colborne, hon. W.
Colebrooke, Sir T.
Collett, J.
Collins, W.
Copeland, Ald.
Corbally, M. E.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Cowper, hon. W.
Craig, W. S.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Currie, Raikes
Curteis, H. B.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Damer, hon. Col.
Dashwood, G.
Dawson, hon. T.
Denison, J. E.
Dennistoun, J.
D'Eyncourt, C. T.
Dickinson, F. H.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C.
Douro, Lord
Drummond, H.
Dugdale, W. S.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncannon, Visct.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, A.
Dundas, D.
Dundas, hon. J. C.
Easthope, Sir J.
Eastnor, Lord
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, W. T.
Egerton, Lord F.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, Edw.
Ellis, Wynn
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, W.
Evans, Sir de L.
Ewart, W.
Feilden, W.
Fielden, J.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Fitzgerald, D. A.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G.
Fleetwood, Sir P.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, Charles R.
Gibson, T. M.
Gill, T.
Gisborne, T.
Glynne, Sir S.
Godson, R.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goulburn, H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, T.
Gregory, W. H.
Grey, Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Capt.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcoat, J.
Herbert, hon. S.
Heron, Sir R.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, Sir J.
Hogg, J. W.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, John
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W.
Howard, hon. J. K.
Howard, hon. E. G.
Howard, P. H.
Howard, Sir R.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, Joseph
Humphery, Ald.
Hutt, W.
James, W.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, John
Jocelyn, Lord
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, Hope
Kelly, Sir FitzRoy
Kirk, Peter
Labouchere, H.
Lambton, H.
Langston, J. H.
Langton, W. G.
Lascelles, hon. W.
Layard, Capt.
Leader, John T.
Leigh, G. C.
Lemon, Sir C.
Loch, James
Lockhart, A. W.
Lyall, George
Macaulay, T. B.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Macnamara, Major
M'Carthy, A.
M'Geachy, T. A.
M'Neil, D.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Lord
Mainwaring, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Marjoribanks, S.

Marshall, W.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Martin, W. C.
Masterman, J.
Matheson, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Meynell, Capt.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitcalf, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Morison, Gen.
Morrison, J.
Mostyn, hon. E.
Muntz, G.
Napier, Sir C.
Neville, R.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
Northland, Lord
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
O'Conor, Don
O'Ferrall, R. M.
Ord, W.
Oswald, Alex.
Oswald, James
Owen, Sir J.
Paget, Col.
Paget, Lord W.
Paget, Lord A.
Palmerston, Lord
Parker, John
Patten, J. W.
Pattison, J.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Philipps, Sir R.
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Phillpotts, J.
Pigot, rt. hon. D.
Plumridge, Capt.
Polhill, F.
Power, J.
Praed, W. T.
Price, Sir R.
Protheroe, Edw.
Pryse, Pryse
Pulsford, R.
Rawdon, Col.
Redington, T.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Roebuck, J. A.
Ross, D. R.
Rumbold, C. E.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Russell, J. D. W.
Sandon, Lord
Scott, Robert
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Sir H.
Seymour, Lord
Shelburne, Earl of
Smith, Benj.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, R. V.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somers, J. P.
Somerton Lord
Somerville, Sir W.
Stanley, W. O.
Stansfield, W. R.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G.
Stewart, P. M.
Stewart, John
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. F.
Tomline, G.
Towneley, J.
Trail, G.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F.
Troubridge, Sir T.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Vane, Lord H.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Villiers, Visct.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, Capt.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Wall, C. B.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wilde, Sir T.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Winnington, Sir T.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, J. S.
Wrightson, W.
Wynn, rt. hon. C. W.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Young, J.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Ackers, J.
Acland, Sir. T.
Acton, Col.
Adair, Lord
Adderly, C. B.
Alford, Lord
Allix, John P.
Antrobus, E.
Arbuthnot, H.
Arkwright, G.
Astell, W.
Attwood, M.
Austin, Col.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J., jun.
Baillie, W.
Balfour, J. M.
Bankes, G.
Baring, T.
Barrington, Visct.
Baskerville, T.
Bateson, T.
Bell, M.
Bell, J.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Blackburne, J.
Blackstone, W. S.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Brisco, Musgrave
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Sir A. B.
Brooke, Lord
Brownrigg, S.
Bruce, Cumming
Bruen, Col.
Bruges, W. H.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J.
Bunbury, T.
Burroughes, H. N.
Campbell, Sir H.
Carew, W. H. P.
Castlereagh, Visct.
Cayley, E. S.
Chandos, Marq.
Chapman, A.
Chelsea, Lord
Cholmondeley, H.
Christopher, R. A.
Churchill, Lord
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Clifton, J. T.
Clive, Visct.
Codrington, Sir W.
Cole, hon. A.
Collett, W. R.
Colquhoun, J. C.
Colville, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Coote, Sir C.
Courtenay, Lord
Davies, D. A. S.
Deedes, W.
Denison, E. B.
Dick, Q.
Disraeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Drax, J. S. W.
Duckworth, Sir J.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, G. C.
East, J. B.
Egerton, Sir P.
Emlyn, Visct.
Entwisle, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, W.
Floyer, J.
Ffolliot, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G.
Fox, S. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Gaskell, J. M.
Goring, C.
Granby, Lord
Gladstone, Capt.
Gooch, E. S.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, W. O.
Gore, W. R. O.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Hamilton, J. H.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hamilton, J. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Heneage, G. H.
Heneage, E.
Henley, J. W.
Hill, Lord E.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Holmes, W. A'Court
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Hoskins, K.
Hotham, Lord
Houldsworth, T.
Howard, hon. H.
Hudson, G.
Hurst, R. H.
Hussey, T.
Ingestre, Lord
Inglis, Sir R.
Irton, S.
Jolliffe, Sir W.
Jones, Capt.
Kemble, H.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Lefroy, A.
Lennox, Lord G.
Leslie, C. P.
Liddell, hon. H.

Lockhart, W. S.
Long, W.
Lopez, Sir R.
Lowther, Sir J. H.
Lowther, Col.
Lygon, Gen.
Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, F. W.
Maclean, D.
Manners, Lord C.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Martin, T. B.
Marton, G.
Maunsel, T. P.
Maxwell, hon. J.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Morgan, O.
Mundy, E. M.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newport, Visct.
Norreys, Lord
O'Brien, A. S.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Packington, J. S.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumptre, J.
Pollington, Lord
Powell, Col.
Price, R.
Pusey, P.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Russell, C.
Ryder, G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, F.
Sheppard, T.
Sheridan, R. B.
Shirely, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, A.
Smith, Sir H.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Spry, Sir S. T.
Stanley, E.
Stuart, J.
Taylor, E.
Taylor, J. A.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, J.
Tower, C.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Turnor, C.
Tyrrell, Sir J.
Verner, Col.
Vesey, hon. T.
Vivian, J. E.
Vyse, R.
Vyvyan, Sir R.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S.
Walsh, Sir. J. B.
Welby, G. Earle
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq.
Worsley, Lord
Wyndham, Col.
Wynn, Sir W.
Yorke, hon. E.

TELLERS.

Beresford, Major
Newdegate, C. N.

Absent (Non-Official).

CONSERVATIVE.

Ashley
Blakemore
Burrell
Dowdeswell
Foreman
Hamilton, C. H.
Hampden
Hardy
Hussey, A.
James, Sir W.
Ker
Lascelles, hon. E.
Mildmay
Morgan, C.
Somerset, Lord G.

LIBERAL.

Archbold
Armstrong
Arundel
Bodkin
Bellew
Berkeley, G.
Callaghan
Duff
French
Granger
Grattan
Hallyburton
Johnson
Kelly
Maher
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, W. J.
O'Brien, C.
Ogle
Osborne
Powell
Ricardo
Roche
Sheil
Talbot
Tuite
Watson
Wemyss
Westenra
White, H.

Paired off.

AYES.	NOES.
Newry, Lord	Alexander, N.
Blake, Sir F.	Wyndham, J. C.
Denison, W. J.	Nicoll, Dr.
Dundas, F.	Trevor, R.
Holland, R.	Hepburn, Sir G.
Listowell, Lord	Lindsay, H.
Maitland, T.	Eaton, Capt.
Ponsonby, hon. C.	Barneby, J.
Rice, E. R.	Archdall, Capt.
Rutherford, A.	Williams, T. P.
Standish, C.	Creswell, A. J. B.
Stuart, W. V.	Bernard, Lord

SUMMARY.

MAJORITY (TELLERS INCLUDED).

Conservatives	112	
Liberals	227	
		339

MINORITY.

Conservatives	231	
Liberals	11	
		242
		581
Absent, including Pairs, (Conservatives) ...		28
Ditto (Liberals)		41
Speaker		1
Seats Vacant—Sudbury 2, Mayo 1, Notts., N. 1, Bridport 1		5
Not taken his Seat (Mr. Hilyard)		1
Cannot vote (Mr. Lindsay, of Wigan) ...		1
		658

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 2, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2); Prosecutors, Witnesses, &c.

Reported. Drainage, &c. (Ireland).

3º. and passed. County Works Presentments (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By the Duke of Richmond, from Clergy, Landowners, Tenants, and others, of the Parish of Llanllwehaiam, and several other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest; and from Farmers, and others, of Doneraile, against Alteration of the Tariff.

THE CAMPAIGN UPON THE SUTLEJ.

The EARL of RIPON then rose to move the Resolution of which he had given notice, conveying the Thanks of the House to the Indian army. He said: My Lords, your Lordships are never niggardly in offering your thanks to those who, in the service of our common Sovereign and of our common country, have distinguished themselves in promoting the honour, the interests, and the safety of their country; and your Lordships may be well assured that you never tender these thanks to those gallant men without inspiring them with feelings of gratitude which may tell, and which do tell, upon their future

efforts, and contribute to produce those results which we contemplate with such unqualified satisfaction And in order that these expressions of your sense of gratitude might come to them in the most gratifying and graceful manner, it has always been your Lordships' desire that there should be nothing either in the words in which these thanks are expressed, or in the manner in which they are recommended to you, which might prevent your Lordships coming to a unanimous vote on the subject. This is the course which I have endeavoured to follow upon the present occasion in the mode in which these resolutions of thanks are worded; and it will be my endeavour, in the course of the observations which I shall have to address to you, to avoid saying anything that shall be inconsistent with this principle. Your Lordships, however, will doubtless expect me, in proposing this vote, to state as briefly as the circumstances will permit me, some of the general considerations and facts connected with these brilliant affairs to which it is now my duty to call your attention. The Papers which have been laid upon your Lordships' Table were not placed there for the purpose of calling upon you to express any opinion with respect to the political aspect of the question ; they were placed there solely for the purpose of enabling you to see what the course of events has been, and therefore to comprehend more correctly the nature of the events themselves. These Papers will exhibit to you what I think every one who has read them must feel to be a singular picture of the state of affairs at the Court of Lahore, which has at last terminated in an open rupture with us. Intrigues of every kind, violence of every kind, plots of every kind, murder after murder, practised against those who might, from time to time, obtain the chief power in that State ; all these circumstances occurring for a long period exhibit a picture of disorder and confusion which is not paralleled, I believe, even in India itself. It is obvious that the knowledge of this state of things could not fail to excite in the minds of the Government of India, much and constant anxiety. Still, however, the policy which was pursued by the Governor General (on which, however, I do not call on your Lordships to express any opinion at present), rendered it not desirable to enter upon a state of hostility to the Lahore Government, in order to put an end to these horrors and scenes of bloodshed. Fears for themselves, however, were soon entertained among the ruling powers of the Government of Lahore, who experienced constant apprehensions for their own lives; and a notion became prevalent among them that the best chance of securing their own lives against the machinations of their own mutinous army, consisted in their inducing that army to pass our frontier, and to commit itself to hostilities with us, not for the purpose of conquest, or of anything the army might gain by such proceedings against us, but for the purpose of compelling us to undertake operations which should end in the destruction of the very army that belonged to the Government opposed to us. Now I believe that to be a circumstance unparalleled in the history even of uncivilized countries. But the Governor General of India did not hold that that circumstance alone constituted a ground which would justify him in assembling an army for the purpose of passing our frontier, and carrying on a war on the Sikh territory. It did, however, render it necessary, in conjunction with other events which had occurred at Lahore—it did render it necessary for the Governor General to consider how he ought to prepare to meet a contingency which might or might not arise, which he hoped would not arise, but which, if it did, would required to be immediately repelled. He therefore concentrated a considerable force as near to the Punjaub as on military grounds it was thought advisable, in order to enable us meet any attack that might be made upon us. There appears at this time to have been great vacillation and doubt in the enemy's councils ; at one time they would advance, at another time they would remain quiet. At length it appeared that the person who exercised the ruling power, the Wuzzeer, the brother of the Ranee, as she is called, who is the mother of the Sovereign on the throne—it appeared that he, a drunken profligate, inflamed with a sort of mad ambition, and terrified perhaps also at the prospect of being put to death by his rivals—caused the assassination of Peshora Singh, who was reputed to be, although I believe he was not in reality, a son of the late Runjeet Singh. This murder, which was exceedingly disagreeable to the troops, induced them to threaten his life ; and he, to avert their vengeance from himself, and seeing that there was little chance of escape for him, considered that it would be at any rate very advisable to exasperate the army against us; and accordingly he showed a most un-

friendly disposition to British interests. However, he shortly after met the fate which has been very common of late years among the rulers of that country: he was himself assassinated. But, my Lords, those who assassinated him entertained a different opinion of the British Government from those which he entertained; and everything seemed to show that the disposition of the new authorities at Lahore was less inimical to English interests, and that they were less inclined to force on a collision with the Government of India. At the same time, there did, it is true, appear to be grounds for apprehending that some mad project on the part of the army was likely to take place; and in the beginning of November, intelligence was transmitted from the political agent at Lahore to the Governor General, that it had been decided in durbar at Lahore to attack the British possessions; that a plan of campaign had been laid down; and that an attack was to be made by four out of seven of the divisions into which the Sikh army was divided; and that their army was to cross the Sutlej at several points, one division crossing 100 miles from the other extremity where the other division was intended to cross. Now, my Lords, that operation, if it had taken place, would have had the effect of bringing detached portions of the Sikh army into our territory at different points—a plan which, I apprehend, is quite at variance with sound military principles, and could scarcely be successful, because as these bodies of troops, consisting of from 8,000 to 10,000 each, would have operated at a considerable distance from each other, they would have been liable to have been defeated in detail, and consequently their likelihood of success would have been very small. This plan, however, was subsequently abandoned: and at length intelligence reached the Governor General about the end of the first week of December, that the concentrated Sikh army was about to cross the Sutlej in the vicinity of Ferozepore. The British force was thereupon immediately directed by the Governor General to concentrate on some point where they might be conveniently placed so as to engage an invading army. Early in the year the two posts of Ferozepore and Loodiana, which are at a considerable distance from each other, and which are the most advanced posts on the left bank of the Sutlej, were materially strengthened. The garrison of Ferozepore, at the time of these operations, consisted of 8,000 men, with twenty-four pieces of field artillery: there were also forty-two pieces of heavy artillery in the fort. This force was deemed by the Governor General and the Commander in Chief to be abundantly sufficient to maintain the position at Ferozepore against any *coup de main*—abundantly sufficient to repel any attack that could be made, on the supposition that the plan was that which had been announced from Lahore by the political agent. Loodiana was also garrisoned by a considerable, though a less force, namely, by one European regiment, by five regiments of native infantry, and by one regiment of cavalry, and two troops of horse artillery. The fort, however, at that place, is but a small one. The remainder of the force was directed to be within reach, and to be ready to move up for the support of Loodiana, and to cover any movement which it might be necessary to make, either in front, or to the right or left, and repel any attack that might be made. The troops accordingly moved up with all possible despatch. Not many days, however, after this, information was received, from which it appeared that the plan originally adopted by the Sikh Government had been abandoned, and that they had entirely changed their plans of operation by proceeding against us with a divided force, and that they contemplated assembling their forces upon the Sutlej, at a place about thirty miles from Ferozepore. On the receipt of this information, orders were given by the Governor General to collect all the forces that were at hand, and move up those that were at Umballah and Meerut, in order to meet any attack that might be made. Many contradictory accounts were given of the enemy's proceedings. At one time time it was said the enemy were moving in large bodies; but there was no information that they were moving their artillery or had collected boats for the purpose of crossing the river. Still our troops were ordered to concentrate themselves; and when it was ascertained that the point where the enemy crossed was Ferozeshah, it was evident to the Governor General that Loodiana was no longer exposed to the same degree of danger as other points, and that the forces in that garrison, and those in Umballah, might be of great assistance, by enabling him to march to the relief of Ferozepore, which was exposed to considerable danger if the whole force of the Sikh army was directed to that quarter. Accordingly the forces were with-

drawn from Loodiana, and were concentrated at a point upon the road between Umballah and Ferozepore. These two bodies of troops were ordered to concentrate on a place called Bussean. Some of the troops from Umballah had previously moved up nearly to Loodiana. But they were ordered to concentrate on Bussean, in order that they might be ready to proceed to any point where operations might be directed to be undertaken. This was done; and the whole force concentrated there, and it was deemed expedient that immediately on their concentration they should advance to the left for the relief of Ferozepore, and with a view to drive the enemy across the Sutlej. On this occasion, it is undoubtedly true that the troops endured great fatigue: they were obliged to make rapid marches, and they had much privation to encounter. But, my Lords, that is the ordinary lot of war, I believe; and no troops in the world are more ready to encounter privations and hardship, or more able and willing to meet all that troops can be exposed to, than ours. They advanced rapidly, in good and perfect order, and came up to Moodkee, twenty miles from Ferozepore. Now, my Lords, when our troops had reached that point, it was evidently impossible for the enemy to remain where he was, and he was therefore compelled to take some decisive project, or to abandon his purpose altogether. His project had been, in the first instance, to capture Ferozepore; but instead of making an attempt to capture it, he took up his position in its neighbourhood, leaving it almost in the rear of his right flank, in a position which rendered that point exceedingly dangerous to him, in combination with the movements of our troops: it was necessary, therefore, for him to interpose between the advance of our army from Moodkee to Ferozepore. Accordingly, as soon as he found that our forces were approaching within a short distance, he determined to make an attack. Leaving a considerable portion of his army in a camp which he had entrenched at no great distance from Ferozepore, he, with the remainder of his men, amounting to 40,000, went forward to make the attack upon our advancing forces. The arrival of this body was announced at head quarters, not long after they had taken up their position at Moodkee; it was necessary that immediate steps should be taken to repel the contemplated attack; it was obviously a very wise policy to bring the enemy to action at the earliest possible moment; accordingly, the troops were ordered to advance, although they were not at that time all come up. The troops did advance, and the two armies met—a sharp action took place, in which the enemy was entirely repulsed with considerable loss in men, and nineteen pieces of cannon. Upon this they retreated, and the effect of the success was, that they retreated into a position which was no longer directly between our forces in advance and Ferozepore; the consequence of which was, that our communication with Ferozepore was immediately established, and a plan arranged by the Commander in Chief, the Governor General, and Sir J. Littler, for bringing the troops from Ferozepore to form a junction with the advancing army, and proceeding in that united force to attack the enemy. This operation was well conceived, and admirably executed, and the junction was effected upon the morning of the 21st of December. The position occupied by the British troops, at half-past one on that day, so far as I am able to judge—for there is no plan of the campaign in this country—appears to have been opposite to one side of that square or oblong which constituted the entrenched camp of the enemy. There being three or four hours daylight left, it was deemed advisable to make an immediate attack—this was a wise decision, and, although some may think it a rash one, I think that that rashness might more appropriately be termed heroism. The attack, in spite of the superior artillery, and in spite of the enemy's troops, who were there assembled, was determined and vigorous. A portion of the entrenched camp was taken, and the camp set on fire, and the last hopes of victory to the enemy appeared to have been dispelled. The darkness of the night, and partly the effect of the fire of the camp, rendered further operations impossible. But it was indispensably necessary to press forward, and it was therefore immediately determined, by the Commander in Chief and the Governor General, that in the morning, as soon as day broke, they would renew the attack. It was not considered as an argument against this step that the troops were fatigued, and that the slaughter had been very great; but it was determined that our army should maintain its post, let what would be the consequence. Meanwhile an attack was made by the enemy on our line, but speedily repulsed by Colonel Wood, aid-de-camp to the Governor-

General, with the 80th regiment, under the command of its gallant leader, Colonel Banbury; and I believe that that was one of the most gallant actions that was ever performed. He completely dispersed the enemy, who drew off, and for the rest of the night contented himself with the distant cannonade of our troops whenever an opportunity occurred. At an early hour in the morning the troops were put in motion, and they swept the whole intrenched camp of the enemy, and captured every piece of artillery within the intrenchment. That, my Lords, was a great success, particularly when it is considered how much the position of these Asiatic armies depends on their intrenchments, defended as they are by artillery which is for the most part not moveable as ours is, but only capable of transport by means of thirty or forty bullocks for each piece of artillery; so that if they are taken the loss to such an army is extremely severe. But the enemy, who, to do them justice, seemed disposed not to allow us to complete without contest the conquest we had begun, determined to attempt the recapture of the camp; but, although they made three separate attacks for that purpose, they all failed. At last nothing remained but to leave the possession of it to us, and they accordingly retired to an open village at four miles distance—a mere mud village—called Sultankhanwalla, in an open country — as open as that table—where there are no trees or any thing of any kind to operate as a protection. This did not certainly offer a very formidable opposition in itself to our troops; and finally not conceiving it possible, by any renewed attack, that he could make any impression or gain any portion of what he had lost, he made across the Sutlej, utterly discomfited, all his projects, as far as they had been developed, having totally failed. I believe, my Lords, that is an account of the transactions on the Sutlej. I am fully aware how utterly inadequate I am to discuss the merits of those who took the lead in this great battle. I believe there never was an occasion in any part of the world in which the indomitable courage of the British soldier was more eminently displayed than in those well-fought actions which I have attempted to describe. There were moments, no doubt, in which the situation of our forces might be difficult; but it is in those situations, my Lords, that the skill of the commander and the courage of the men are best displayed; and the consequence of both in this case was a glorious victory over an enormous superiority of numbers. My Lords, there were one or two circumstances personal to the Governor General that I may be allowed to refer to. I mention this in respect to him because I happen to know the circumstances in which he was concerned. In his own sphere, I have no doubt, every officer of the British army would manifest the same courage, the same sagacity, and the same untiring energy. On the night of the 21st, the Governor General was in a very critical position. He had ordered the troops to lie down when their exertions were no longer wanted, and keep quiet; and in order to show them what a resolute and cool spirit can do, he went and lay down with each of four regiments, to keep up their courage, and to show them how important it is for troops to be quiet in the face of a numerous enemy. We may easily conceive what were the feelings of those gallant soldiers when they saw him thus sharing with them that partial repose, and preparing to meet with them the dangers of the succeeding day. Your Lordships may conceive the extent of the danger to which the Governor General was exposed, when you are informed that the loss of staff-officers was greater than had ever been known in any previous action. No less than five of the Governor General's aides-de-camp were killed, and five more were wounded; and in the midst of this scene—a scene of great anxiety and, possibly, some doubt—he was left with only one aide-de-camp, and that aide-de-camp his own son, a lad of sixteen years of age, a boy who had but recently joined, without military experience, knowing scarcely anything of the nature of the duties which devolved upon him, but, animated by his father's indomitable spirit, was employed by his father, young as he was, as his only aide-de-camp to convey his orders from point to point, a duty which he performed with a valour worthy of his father's fame, and which my Lords, I hope, we may regard as an index of what he will himself do on other occasions when he shall again be called upon to serve his country. My Lords, these circumstances are not mentioned by the Governor General in his despatches. My gallant Friend does not himself speak of his son's services, but having heard of them I have thought it my duty to mention them to your Lordships. Sir Henry Hardinge had with him another son, who was designed for the military service, but by a dreadful accident which occurred to

him some years ago, and which had rendered the amputation of a foot necessary, has been since compelled to abandon it. This young man also remained by his father the whole of that night, and shared in all its dangers and anxieties; but his father felt (and not unnaturally) that having no direct duty to perform, and being from his misfortune rendered incapable of active exertion, his presence near him on the following day could be of no advantage, while it might in some degree distract his attention from his own important duties, and he therefore compelled him to retire, to the great discomfiture and annoyance of the young man himself. These, my Lords, may appear small matters, perhaps, but still they are of importance, as indicating the mind of the individual to whom they refer. I wish I were able to do justice to all who have been engaged in these important actions—I wish it was in my power to have a more perfect knowledge of all that took place on these occasions, so that I might be able to do the same justice to others which I have endeavoured to do to the Governor General. My Lords, these advantages to which I have referred were not gained without very heavy loss—that loss is in itself not only great, but, in some of its features, exceedingly painful. One of the most distinguished men this or any other army ever possessed fell in this battle. Who does not know the name of Sir Robert Sale? Who can forget the services that he rendered to his Sovereign? Who did not glory in the honours that were conferred upon him? and who did not participate in the gratitude of his admiring country? He fell in the battle at Moodkee; and I am sure that your Lordships, should you be called on to do honour to his memory, will not be slow to answer the call, and to show, that although you no longer have the benefit of the services he has hitherto rendered, you have not forgotten his name, which, as Lord Hutchinson said of the gallant Abercromby, must ever be "embalmed in the recollections of a grateful posterity." Another gallant officer to whom I will refer is Sir John M'Caskill. He found the same fortunate fate that Sir Robert Sale did; and, from the terms in which he is spoken of by Sir Hugh Gough, you must see that the army has in him sustained a great and heavy loss. There was another individual who fell in this action, whom I cannot avoid noticing, even if it should appear to be somewhat invidious to do so, because it is impossible to mention all who fell on this occasion—I mean Major Broadfoot—one who has singular demands upon our respect and gratitude, as a political servant of the Company, as well as in his military capacity. He had been two years and a half political agent of the Governor General in those quarters, and performed his duties in a manner which won for him universal respect and admiration. He knew the country and he knew the people, and of all men was perhaps the most fitted to be employed in so delicate and difficult a mission. Admirably, however, as he performed his civil duties, he did not forget what belonged to his military character. If he had any fault, it was that of being too forward. He was always first in the fray, and in this instance he paid the penalty of his gallant character. The tribute paid to him by the Governor General is no more than is just and deserved; and though I have no right to panegyrize him as an officer, yet, knowing what he has done in his political character, I thought I was bound to notice the irreparable loss which we have sustained by the death of that individual. My Lords, the result of these battles will best be felt by a comparision of what were the objects of the enemy, and what was the object which our army had in view, and which in part they had achieved. The object of the Sikhs, a proud, vain-glorious, boasting people, was nothing less than to inundate the whole of the country from the Sutlej to the Jumna; the march they proposed was a march direct to Delhi, to rescue from our sway the territories of the Great Mogul. They crossed the river in great force, and their first intention evidently was, and must have been, to capture Ferozepore. The next object was to disperse their numerous light cavalry over the country, to secure its resources and strengthen its forts—for they have many forts on that side of the Sutlej—to terrify the timid into acquiescence in their plans, and to force those who wished to remain faithful to us to leave us, and, in short, to confine us to the smallest possible limits in India. Such were the objects they had in view—all of them have failed! [*Cheers.*] Our object was to force the Sikhs back to their own territory, to save Ferozepore, to compel the doubtful to adhere to their allegiance, to support and confirm those who were friendly to us, and to show that we could not be attacked, insulted, and invaded, with impunity. All the objects the enemy had in view in this campaign have utterly failed; and all the objects we

had in view have entirely succeeded. With respect to the future, it would be idle and unnecessary to say much; but I do say, that in the short space of three weeks all our objects have been attained, and attained by the combination, by the courage, and by the exertions by which great battles are gained, and which I think will leave an impression upon the minds of the Sikhs which they will not readily forget. They are a warlike people, though I have some doubts that they are partial to hand-to-hand conflicts; they are, nevertheless, a warlike people, and love the excitement of war; but I think they will have received a lesson that they will not easily forget: and we have a right to suppose that these victories have given that security to our frontiers which it is of so great importance to maintain. Perhaps I have been induced, from personal and affectionate regard for the Governor General, to speak of him as I have done on this occasion; and I may have appeared to pass over the gallant deeds of others. I have no right to do that, and I therefore bear the most willing testimony to the admirable spirit and gallantry of that experienced and tried officer, the Commander in Chief, Sir Hugh Gough—a man who has served his country beneath the great man who is now next me on my right (the Duke of Wellington); who has passed all the best years of his life, and they are not less than seventy, in the active service of his country; and who has served in many quarters of the world with undoubted credit, with high renown, and in a manner which richly deserved the honours which it had pleased the Sovereign to confer upon him. My Lords, it is the duty of the Government to endeavour by all the means that it can—now that this war has been brought upon us—forced upon us, to contribute to its successful issue. The Governor of Bombay has, with great activity and energy forwarded to Kurrachee a considerable reinforcement of British and native troops, supported by artillery; and he has in reserve two more regiments if their services are required. He has marched a regiment of cavalry from Poonah to join the forces in the Sutlej; and every movement that he has ordered has been effected with the greatest despatch. He has moved other troops to Kurrachee, there to be under the command of as gallant a hero as ever wore the soldier's uniform, Sir C. Napier, who, with characteristic energy, is collecting all the means at his disposal to bring them to bear on the point where they may be most efficiently applied; and all who know Sir Charles Napier, know what his gallantry and talents are, and, above all, what his talent is in inspiring confidence, unlimited confidence, among thsse whom he commands; and if he takes part in this war, we may look for a revival of the glories of Meanee and Hyderabad. Every thing has been done that is possible to facilitate any ulterior operations that may be necessary in this war; but you may depend upon it, that what I now propose to your Lordships to tender your vote of thanks to those gallant men, is not among the least efficient modes of exciting them to farther deeds of valour, and leading them to renew on other occasions those devoted actions for which they have gained such imperishable glory and renown. It is with these feelings that I have brought those services before you—though unable to bring such military questions very plainly under your Lordships' notice. I know that your Lordships will cordially respond to my call, and I therefore beg to move that the Thanks of this House be given to those engaged in these battles, in the entire confidence that I shall have the full support of this House, and that we shall show to those gallant men that they are not called upon to serve an ungrateful country. The noble Earl then moved the following Resolutions:—

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Right Honourable Lieutenant General Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor General of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, for the Energy and Ability with which he directed the Military Means at his Disposal, to the repelling of the unprovoked Invasion, by the Sikh Army, of the Dominions of the British Government, and of the Protected States, upon the Left Bank of the Sutlej; and also for the Firmness and Gallantry with which he directed the Operations of that Portion of the Army under his immediate Command, in the Afternoon and Night of December 21st, 1845, and on the Morning of the 22nd, upon which Occasion the Enemy's Defences were carried by Storm, the greater Part of their Artillery captured, and their subsequent Attempts to regain what they had lost, repeatedly defeated:

"That the Thanks of this House be given to General Sir Hugh Gough, Baronet, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, Commander in Chief of the Forces in the East Indies, for the distinguished Valour with which he directed and led the several Attacks upon the Enemy, and for the eminent Services rendered by him, in the Battles of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd of December, 1845; displaying, as he did, in conjunction with the Governor General, a brilliant Example to the Troops of Perseverance and Courage in critical Circumstances, and of irresistible Ardour in the several Attacks made upon the Enemy:

"That the Thanks of this House be given to Major General Sir Henry George Smith, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, to Major General Walter Raleigh Gilbert, and to Major General Sir John Hunter Littler, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, and to the several Officers, European and Native, under their Command, for the eminent Services rendered by them in the recent arduous and successful Operations:

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Non-commissioned Officers and Private Soldiers, European and Native, for the Perseverance and Fortitude maintained by them at Moodkee on the 18th of December, 1845, and for the daring Valour with which they forced the Enemy's Intrenchments at Ferozeshah on the 21st and 22nd of December, captured most of his Guns, and finally compelled the Sikh Army, of greatly superior Numbers, to retire within their own Frontier; and that this Resolution be signified to them by the Commanders of the several Corps."

The LORD CHANCELLOR having put the Resolutions,

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said: I think the Resolutions just proposed by my noble Friend for our adoption, and those events on which the Resolutions are founded, ought not to pass without some observations from other quarters, though I feel that my noble Friend has done full justice to the subject. But it is most gratifying to my feelings to be enabled to state, after perusing with the attention which they deserve the documents which Her Majesty's Government have thought fit to lay before your Lordships, and with that attention also which I thought due to the particular terms of the Resolutions proposed by the noble Earl, as founded on those communications, that it is consistent with the most perfect sincerity of feeling on my part, as I have no doubt it is consistent with the feelings of your Lordships, to give to those Resolutions not merely acquiescence, but the most cordial support. Those Resolutions go, as I understand them, to two objects, the expression of the grateful admiration of this House of the valour, zeal, and devotion to the public evinced by the whole Indian army employed on this occasion, and also an expression of our approbation of the distinguished officer who fills the situation of Governor General, for the energy and ability with which he has employed the means placed at his disposal. To both of these objects your Lordships cannot but give the most decided expression of your concurrence. With respect to the conduct of the army on this occasion, without pretending to judge of the particular tactics that have been followed in the course of the conflict, there is still enough in the Papers to enable even a person like myself, or any other of your Lordships who will exercise his own understanding, to appreciate to the fullest extent the proofs there presented to us of a devotion which has known no bounds, and which I will venture to say has never been exceeded. Because, my Lords, it is impossible to peruse these Papers without observing that, from a concurrence of circumstances, which, if unavoidable, must be admitted to have been unfortunate, though attended in the end with the most glorious results, more than ordinary difficulties had to be overcome; those circumstances being a numerous army, harassed by rapid and forced marches, and consequent fatigue, and occasional discouragement and difficulty in the face of a superior enemy—in the course of one week every one of these circumstances were brought to bear, by what I must call misfortune, in the most unfavourable manner, in the situation in which their troops were placed, and being so brought to bear and so combined, they were met and subdued in a way that produced results of glory, I will not say unparalleled, but of glory of the most signal, distinguished, and lasting nature to British arms. And, my Lords, it is to the zeal and devotion displayed by that army that you owe the additional lesson that has been given to the nations of Asia, and that the population, civil and military, of those countries have been made to see that the star of British power has shone on this occasion not with diminished lustre—and has added to those claims on the gratitude and confidence of those nations, which already existed. There is evidence in these Papers, showing that not only Her Majesty's European forces, but the sepoys employed with them, have acted together in a manner, and evinced a spirit, which must tend to strengthen and cement the ties that ought to exist between the two countries. And I trust, with that accelerated speed with which communications travel now from one end of the globe to the other, the impression created in this House may reach the population of those countries, and more especially that part of it which is employed in their defence; and I hope that it may be felt that on this day the House of Lords was not wanting in expressing their gratitude for their eminent claims and services. My Lords, I view with unmixed satisfaction the whole series of achievements so perseveringly executed, and performed under discouragements which in-

crease their claim to your consideration and your gratitude. With respect to the other part of the vote, that which relates to the distinguished Governor General, it is not to be doubted, after reading these Papers, that in the position in which he was placed during the week or the fortnight preceding the invasion of the Sikh army, combining, as he did, the duties of a civilian with those of a military man, his conduct in both capacities exhibited the most zealous devotion to the interests of his country. His was a most difficult position—a position which, I venture to think, from its peculiarity, may deserve, at some future time, to engage the consideration of future Governments in Eastern arrangements; but I think there is no man that, seeing this distinguished military man placed in that position, on the frontier of the countries of which he was Governor General, when those countries were invaded, will venture to say he did not do his duty in passing at once from that high civil character which he had occupied before, and drawing his sword at the moment when his sword, and that which was still more valuable, his example, would be most efficacious in exciting to deeds of valour, and insuring the success which it had the effect of obtaining. [*Cheers.*] I therefore think that he in that particular situation in which he was placed, deserves the approbation and the thanks of this House, warmly as they are expressed in this resolution. [*Cheers.*] I will not attempt, for the reasons stated by the noble Earl for abstaining, to dwell upon the individual merits either of Sir Hugh Gough, much as I appreciate them, or of other commanders, highly as they have been exhibited upon this occasion; they are before your Lordships; they are all entitled to a share in your approbation, and they will, I am confident, obtain it by your unanimous vote this day. [*Cheers.*] I will as little be tempted, though I am far from complaining of my noble Friend for having gone into it, into the species of political narrative with which he has not at all unnaturally accompanied this Motion, but upon which I am confident he did not mean by implication to obtain anything like an opinion from your Lordships, which opinion would indeed be valueless if it were given, founded as it would be, upon very imperfect means of consideration. Upon that part of the subject, therefore, I do not wish to give any opinion whatever; I will only say, that if the time shall come when it shall be the duty of your Lordships to review all the circumstances which have preceded this great and glorious event—when you come to consider the policy which had been adopted, and which certainly deserves to be characterized as a pacific policy, your Lordships will give to the authorities of that country—and I am sure it will weigh deeply in your Lordships' minds—the full credit of an anxiety, not only to avoid all unnecessary war, but to go beyond that, and to make it palpable to all the world that we had, as far as it was in our power, laid aside the part, if we ever acted the part, of aggressors in India, and that nothing but the most unprovoked invasion could induce us to draw the sword, until it became our duty to draw it; although undoubtedly that determination did not relieve the Government in India from the duty of providing in the most efficacious and in the fullest manner for that necessity, when it arose in so formidable a quarter. But those are considerations into which I do not wish to go. If I am not prepared to pronounce any opinion upon them in a favourable sense, I am certainly as little prepared to pronounce an opinion upon them in an unfavourable sense. All that I wish to do is to reserve my opinion upon that subject, for any time when it may become matter of consideration for your Lordships, and to confine it at this moment to that great transaction which stands before your eyes in all the splendour of its own success—that military transaction in which the most warlike nation of the East made an unprovoked attempt upon our dominion and our supremacy, and was, by the undiminished valour of our troops, European and Native, signally and I trust for ever, defeated. I give my most cordial sanction to this vote.

The Duke of WELLINGTON: My Lords, after the speech of the noble Marquess, I should be unpardonable if I were to say one word which could occasion a difference of opinion in this House; and after the speech of my noble Friend near me, there really remains but little for me to say upon the military operations which have occurred: but I could not hear a Motion of this description discussed without adding to what has been stated, my unqualified approbation of the conduct of the troops on this occasion, and also of the officers who commanded them; and particulary of my right hon. and gallant Friend the Governor General, who, after having made all the arrangements appertaining to

his duty as Governor General, in order to collect all the resources of the country for the purpose of the great contest impending, having collected all the troops and made all the arrangements for the security of the country, volunteered his services in his rank in the army, in order to give to give his assistance to the officer commanding the army in chief in carrying on those operations which remained for him to carry on in order to secure the public interests and the possession of the country. There is no obligation on an officer placed in his situation to take that course; you can hardly point to a single instance of a man being placed in that situation; but he has given us an example which I hope will always be followed. When he found his services could be useful, he laid aside his position and even his power as Governor General; for it should not be forgotten that he would have carried with him into the field the power over the military operations of the army; he laid that aside—which indeed it is true, according to the usual practice, could not in that way be exercised, and most particularly in his case could not, because Her Majesty, when he went to India, and the Court of Directors, gave him his commission to succeed to the command of the army after the death or coming away of the present Commander in Chief; but he volunteered his service and his assistance to the Commander in Chief in the great contest which was impending. But the noble Marquess has said truly, that all exerted themselves and did everything in their power to obtain the great result which has crowned their efforts. It is not generally known, my Lords, but I know it, that the enemy's position was completely closed in by intrenchments, so closed around, that it deserved rather the name of a fortress than a fortified position; and, notwithstanding the advantages our troops in India have, of having water carriages and persons attached to each company whose duty it is to supply them with water, they laboured in this action under the singular disadvantage of being deprived even of that refreshment for nearly twenty-four hours, because the country happened to be so much dried up, and the villages so distant. Under these circumstances it was that the troops carried this position, certainly with very great loss, but which I hope has not left them in a state otherwise than efficient, if their services should be called for on military duty. I really must say, that I have not for a length of time heard of an action that has given me so much unqualified satisfaction as this, excepting in one particular. I have read with pain of one regiment, to which the word "panic" was applied; and I considered it my duty, in the position in which I am placed, to examine particularly into the circumstances. I see, in the returns, that that regiment is stated to have lost five-twelfths of its number, and a vast number of officers and non-commissioned officers. I have seen an account which states, that in the first quarter of an hour from the time when the regiment first entered into action, one third of its officers fell. I cannot question the accuracy of the report of the operations made by the commanding officer; but I wish that this officer, when he sat down to write an elaborate report of the conduct of the troops under his command, had referred to the list of killed and wounded; and if he had inquired into the loss sustained by that regiment, I believe he would have found that they were absolutely mowed down by the fire under which they were advancing. I have made inquiries respecting that regiment, and I find that it has been sixteen years in the East Indies; that in the course of forty years it has served thirty-three years abroad, and only seven in the United Kingdom; that in the course of the sixteen years during which it has served in the East Indies it has been in all parts of India; that its numbers have been recruited twice over since it has been in that country; and that at this moment, of these men who made that attack and suffered that loss, three-fourths had not been seven years in the service. I considered it my duty to examine into the state of this regiment, seeing that word "panic;" and I believe I have with me a most extraordinary report of their good conduct from this very general officer on a former occasion; and it will convince your Lordships that if the list of killed and wounded had been brought before him on that occasion it would have been impossible for him to apply that word to them. I cannot find the paper now, but it contains the expression of unqualified approbation of the state of this very regiment, by this same general officer, Sir J. Littler, upon the last inspection, at Christmas last. I was anxious to read it to your Lordships to show that to the accident of the dreadful fire kept up upon them, and their being mowed down, you ought to attribute what occurred, and not to a deficiency or failure on their part.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY

said, that though he should think it in the worst possible taste for him to attempt to add any praise to that which had just been rendered to the army in India, he must for a moment refer to the devotion to the public service and the ardent co-operation of the two distinguished individuals who came in contact on that occasion, and at once threw away every feeling of jealousy, or consideration of fame, or *éclat*, the Governor General placing himself second in command, and showing thus a gallantry that could not be too highly commended. It was of the utmost importance, too, to the character of the British army, that on every occasion the individuals highest in command should be the first to throw themselves into the post of danger; for our soldiers, if they saw these relax, would not show that indomitable courage which was their characteristic. Most pre-eminently had this marked the conduct of one of those distinguished men on this occasion. When the morning dawned, after a night spent in lying first with one regiment and then with another, exhausted with hearing the cries of the wounded on the one hand, and of savage foes on the other, he declared that he would rather die on the field than relinquish any portion of the territory we possessed; and when the lines were drawn up he placed himself on one of the flank lines, with such of his aides-de-camp as survived, the Commander in Chief taking his position on the other flank. He placed himself thirty yards in front of the line, fearing lest the troops, from their eagerness, might fire too soon to be effective. He kept his men steady in their positions, led them forward to the attack of the enemy's entrenchments, and only gave the word to the troops to fire when their fire might be effective. If their Lordships looked to the concentration of the three different bodies of troops, they would perceive that, however hazardous the operation was, it was nevertheless effected as the Commander-in-Chief directed; and when they considered that 50,000 of the enemy were opposed to 15,000 or 16,000 men on our side, was the loss, great as it had been, greater than under such circumstances could be expected? Supposing that this action had been gained with comparatively very little loss, the cry at home would then have been that these Indian troops—these Sikhs—did not know how to fight, and that they were not equal to French troops. But what was the case? The Sikhs appeared to have fought, according to all accounts, as well as any troops with which the British had ever been engaged. It was quite impossible to have a great victory without a corresponding loss. Their Lordships were aware, that previous to this victory, the Commander in Chief and the Governor General directed all the operations, the latter having had five of his ten aides-de-camp wounded, and five killed. The Commander in Chief was one of the bravest men, he believed, in the army. He had served in the Peninsula, and during those operations in India had exhibited the most indomitable courage. They might talk of the rashness or boldness of general officers placing themselves at the head of their troops, and unnecessarily exposing themselves; but Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge, in doing so, only followed the example of the school in which they were brought up—the example of the noble and illustrious Duke in that House, who was always foremost at the post of danger. That noble Duke, on whom the whole existence of the army in his time depended, was always exposed to danger, and thousands of bullets whizzed around his head. The noble Duke might have been wrong in so exposing so valuable a life to danger; but his was an example followed by the officers who served under him, and which would be remembered by all who came after. He had been led to make these observations in consequence of a remark which fell the other night, without notice, from a noble Duke (Duke of Richmond), from which it might be inferred that the Commander in Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, and the Governor General, Sir Henry Hardinge, had not acted with sufficient prudence, in both placing themselves at the head of the troops, and that an anxiety had been shown to seek "a bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth." As an animadversion seemed to have been passed to the effect, that one or other of those officers ought not to have been in the action, he (the Marquess of Londonderry) thought it right to express his opinion of the admirable manner in which those distinguished individuals conducted the operations. Before concluding, he would observe that he perceived that in these engagements in India four regiments were commanded by majors. He did not know whether this arose from niggardly economy or not; but he thought that Lieutenant Colonels should not be taken away from their regiments to command brigades. It was a great advantage to a regiment to have, at

its head, the officer who was long known to have been in command of the regiment.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON said that his noble Friend was mistaken on that point. There could be no niggardly economy on the part of the Government with respect to the matter to which he had referred, the whole establishment in India being paid by the East India Company; and he believed also that there was no niggardly economy with respect to it on the part of that Company. The fact was, that it had been the invariable practice to require—both when he was in India and ever since—field-officers of the regiments of the army there to perform general duty—that was to say, to command brigades according to their rank, there not being a sufficient number of general officers in the country in order to take the command of several brigades.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY said that the noble Duke had not answered his question, but repeated his statement. If there were not sufficient general officers in India for the purpose he referred to, there ought to be; and if the East India Company did not pay them the Government ought.

The DUKE of RICHMOND should not have risen to trouble their Lordships on this occasion, had it not been for the remarks of the noble and gallant Marquess who had just sat down. He seemed to find fault with him (the Duke of Richmond) for not giving notice of a question he had put to the noble President of the Board of Control. He had, however, done that which was more regular and in accordance with the Orders of their Lordships' House. On the noble President of the Board of Control laying certain Papers on their Lordships' Table, he (the Duke of Richmond) asked him whether those Papers contained any order or instruction in reference to future occasions, to prevent anything like a divided command in our army; and he took the opportunity at that time of stating, that he meant no attack on the Governor General, for whom he entertained feelings of great respect and friendship; at the same time he could not allow those feelings of respect and friendship to induce him to pass over what might hereafter be drawn into a dangerous precedent. He could suppose himself in the situation of commanding a brigade, and receiving an order from the Governor General to move to the right, and another from the Commander in Chief to move to the left; and he could imagine how embarrassing his position would be. It was simply in reference to the general rule that there should be only one officer commanding in chief in an army that he had ventured to make that observation; and he was far from desiring to impute blame to the Governor General, for it was only natural for a gallant officer like him to wish to place himself in the thickest part of the action. As he was now on his legs, he trusted that he might be permitted to state that he cordially concurred in every thing which had fallen from the noble President of the Board of Control, from the noble and gallant Duke, and from the noble Marquess who supported the Motion, with respect to the discipline, good conduct, and heroism of those men who had achieved the late splendid triumphs. He had also seen with feelings of the greatest satisfaction that Sir H. Hardinge had intimated to that army his intention to award a medal to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers. Those brave men who had participated in the late splendid victories were to have a medal recording their conduct. He did hope and trust, then, that Her Majesty might be advised to take this opportunity of ordering a favourable answer to be returned to the memorial, most numerously signed by the veteran officers in the Peninsular campaigns, who felt not the slightest jealousy at their successors in the very regiments in which they served in the Peninsula receiving medals, but who, nevertheless, entertained the deepest feeling that there could be no reason why those who served in times past should be an exception almost to the general rule, and remain undecorated, having nothing to show for their services, except, indeed, their numerous wounds. They, too, had often and often received the thanks of Parliament for having efficiently and honourably served their King and country in days of the greatest danger, and he hoped and trusted that their prayers would not be unheeded. He now must request his noble Friend at the head of the Indian Board to consider whether it might not be possible to have the names of the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, who had fallen or had been wounded in these actions, published in this country. Many private soldiers could not write, and others were incapable in the midst of arduous campaigns from becoming correspondents. He believed that in the case of a naval engagement the names of the private marines and private

sailors, wounded or killed, were invariably published in the *Gazette*. It might be said that it would be inconvenient to follow this example in respect to large armies; but he put it to his noble Friend, whether, as the birth-place of every soldier was registered, he believed, at the War Office, it might not be easy to have lists made out and sent to the different counties for insertion in the local newspapers. He was sure that his noble Friend would agree with him in thinking that it would be most desirable to relieve the deep anxiety and agonizing suspense, under which parties, the relatives of those brave men, many of them being persons in a humble station of life, were now suffering from ignorance of the fate of those they loved best. From practical knowledge, in consequence of residing in the country and mixing with the labourers in his neighbourhood, he could assure their Lordships that such a publication would be considered one of the greatest boons which could be conferred on our more humble and honest fellow subjects. He thought it right to make those suggestions, because he thought, that as the principle was admitted, in respect to the navy, it might also be applied with respect to those who were killed in the service of the army on foreign and distant stations.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH felt it would be quite unpardonable in him were he to detain their Lordships by many observations, after what had fallen from his noble Friend, who had so well proposed those resolutions, and from the noble Marquess opposite, who had so justly and eloquently supported them. Least of all should he be justified in attemping to add anything to what had fallen from the noble Duke near him (the Duke of Wellington) because he knew that one word of approbation from that noble Duke was dearer to the soldier than any honour or compliment he could possibly receive from any other question. But he thought that their Lordships would forgive him for not allowing this discussion to close without taking this public opportunity of expressing the deep gratification with which he had witnessed this last and greatest achievement of the army with which he had been very recently connected, which had at all times his entire confidence, and which had on this as on all other occasions justified the confidence he reposed in it. Everything that had passed that night must be most satisfactory to the Governor General, the Commander in Chief, and to all the officers and troops engaged; but knowing that army as he did, he assured their Lordships that nothing to-night had been said which, to the Commander in Chief, to the Governor General, and to all the officers and troops engaged (and his remark applied as much, if not more, perhaps, to the native troops) nothing would be so satisfactory as that which had been said by the noble Duke with respect to Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment. He knew the deep feeling of poignant regret with which the despatch which had been referred to, would be read in every regiment in India; and he knew that the Governor General would have gone to the regiment in question, and told the men composing it that nothing had passed to diminish his confidence in them; and he (Lord Ellenborough) trusted that he would add what, like a true soldier, he knew would strike on their hearts and feelings—that as a proof of his confidence he reserved for them the privilege of taking the breach at Lahore. He (Lord Ellenborough) knew how that announcement would be received. Every one expected British troops to do their duty, and those who had been in India knew that the native troops did their duty also. To him it was a great satisfaction to perceive that on this occasion the native soldiers had not only borne as patiently as they ever had done, privations, severe difficulties, and long marches, during which they suffered from the want of food and water, but had also braved the most severe and destructive fire of the enemy by the side of those whom they honoured, respected, and loved. Above all things, it was gratifying to him to observe their undeviating and unshaken fidelity to their colours, notwithstanding that every attempt was made to seduce them from their allegiance. They had seen within forty miles of their position for eighteen months a mutinous army dictatating to its Government—they had seen that army purchased for the commission of successive crimes by successive donatives—they had seen the pay of that army raised to double the amount of their own—and they had every offer made them likely to operate on troops of less tried fidelity. They had resisted them all. From the time when the Sikhs passed the Sutlej, not one man deserted; all remained steady to their colours, and fought as they ever had fought by the side of the British soldiers. This was to him satisfactory, because he saw in it not only a proof that the native troops were what they always had been, but also an

earnest of future triumphs. He knew that the same fidelity which had enabled them to repel the Sikhs across the Sutlej would also enable them to follow the Sikhs afterwards to Lahore. Perhaps he ought not to attempt to add anything to what had already been said; but he could not avoid saying that he looked with confidence to the army in India, and that he must always follow with the deepest interest their achievements and all their movements. He knew that nothing could have been done more satisfactory to the individuals concerned, or more useful, than what had been done by their Lordships to-night. Their Lordships might be assured, that in the circumstances in which he stood, the Governor General required all the moral support which could be given him by Parliament and the country, as well as all that material and effectual support which would undoubtedly be rendered him by the Government.

The EARL of AUCKLAND said, that though he felt that he could add nothing to that which had been already said by many of their Lordships, yet as he had been personally and intimately acquainted with many of those brave officers who had fallen, and also well acquainted with many of them who had survived again to serve their country, he was unwilling to appear to sit coldly through this debate, and not express publicly his entire concurrence in all that had been said in favour of the army in India. Having said this, and strongly feeling that the subject had been exhausted, he would no longer detain their Lordships; but he assured them that he never gave a vote with greater satisfaction than that which he was now about to give in favour of the proposed Resolutions.

The LORD CHANCELLOR then put the Resolutions to the House, and declared them to be carried *nemine contradicente*.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 2, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Nottingham County (Southern Division), Thomas Blackburne Thornton Hildyard, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Turnpike Roads (Scotland).
2°. Print Works.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Sir William Heathcote, from Owners and Occupiers of Land in the Parishes of West Meon, Warnford, Exton, Corhampton, and Meon Stoke, against any Diminution of the Protection hitherto granted to Agriculture.—By several hon. Members, from an immense number of places, for a Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Bright, from Inhabitants of Reading and Neighbourhood, against Vote of Thanks to the Army in India.—By Lord Charles Fitzroy, from Johnson Gedge, of Bury St, Edmunds, Printer, for allowing certain Deductions in the Property Tax.—By Lord John Russell, from Shipowners of the Port of London, for a Reduction of the Duty on Timber.—By Mr. Wakley, from James Soper, of Monxton, for Inquiry into Andover Union.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Members of the West End Economic and Mutual Benefit Building Institution, and Woolwich New Benefit Building Association, for Alteration of the Benefit Building Societies Act.—By Mr. Dennistoun, from Magistrates and Commissioners of Police of the Town of Gorbals, in favour of Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Inhabitants of Hyde, and by Mr. Wilson Patten, from Ministers of different Religious Denominations of the Town of Warrington, in favour of a Ten Hours' (Factory) Bill.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Inhabitants of Alva, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Dennistoun, from Elizabeth Dick, Glasgow, for prohibiting the Exaction of Fees in the Glasgow Small Debts Court.—By Mr. Mackinnon, from Inhabitants of Saffron Walden, and by Mr. John Abel Smith, from Inhabitants of the City of Chichester, against Enrolment of the Militia.—By Mr. Walker, from Members of the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the Bury Union, for Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Mr. O'Connell, from Landlords, Clergy, Freeholders, and others, of the United Parishes of Mountshannon and Clonrush, for adopting some remedy for Diseased Potatoes.—By Dr. Bowring, from Mary Elizabeth Wyburd, of Gravesend, and Ann Furrell, of Vicarage Place, Kensington, for Inquiry respecting William Henry Wyburd.

FORGED PETITIONS.

MR. C. BERKELEY rose to call the attention of the House to the petition presented by him on Friday last. It related to the forgery of signatures to a petition which purported to come from Cheltenham, but which had been sent from Manchester. He believed that it was a breach of the privileges of the House, and he was ready to adopt any suggestion the House might think proper to make. He had letters in his pocket to show that many of these signatures were forged. The matter was well worthy the consideration of the House, because there was a general complaint out of doors that the petitions of the people were not treated with proper respect and attention; and he could not wonder at it, if petitions were got up in such a way. He moved that the petition be referred to a Select Committee, to ascertain the circumstances under which, and the parties by whom, the signatures thereto were annexed.

MR. NEWDEGATE seconded the Motion. He thought it a fitting time to call the attention of the House to the conduct of the agents of the Anti-Corn-Law League, in the registration courts. If the privileges of the House were endangered by the forgery of signatures, they were still more so by the attempt to influence unduly the election of Members for that House. He was anxious, if a Committee was appointed now, that its inquiries should not be con-

fined to the subject-matter of the petition, but that it should extend to the far more important question of the undue interference of the League in the registration courts. In the registration courts of Warwickshire, in October last, a great number of objections were served, all of them bearing the name of the same individual, an inhabitant of Coventry; in the district of Birmingham and Edgbaston alone 710 objections were served, many of them not being delivered till after the proper time. He understood that upwards of 30,000 objections had passed in one day through the Manchester post-office.

MR. HUME rose to order. He should be happy to hear any statement on the subject of interference with the elections of Members; but the question was not before the House. He suggested that the hon. Member should give notice of a Motion on the subject.

MR. NEWDEGATE understood that the conduct of the Anti-Corn-Law League had been referred to in the petition presented by the hon. Member. He wished, in corroboration of that statement, to adduce further evidence, in reference to the more direct interference with the privileges of the House.

THE SPEAKER said, the question now was for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the circumstances connected with the signatures affixed to the petition presented by the hon. and gallant Member for Cheltenham, and whether such signatures were forgeries. Unless, therefore, the hon. Member was prepared to bring forward statements in respect to such Motion, he apprehended that the Amendment moved by the hon. Gentleman would not affect the privileges of the House in reference to the petition of the hon. and gallant Member.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he would, of course, bow to the decision of the right hon. Gentleman; but if he were not out of order he would move that it be an Instruction to this Committee of Inquiry to enter further into the case of all the signatures attached to the petitions which he had just referred to.

MR. BRIGHT observed that he had offered the other night to second the Motion of the hon. Member for Cheltenham, but he had since received an explanation, which, perhaps, he had better submit to the House before the Motion was disposed of. He held in his hand a letter from the Secretary to the Anti-Corn-Law League at Manchester, which he would read to the House:—

"National Anti-Corn-Law League,
Manchester, Feb. 28.

"Dear Sir—I see by the newspapers of to-day that you have had a stir in the House about a petition from Cheltenham, which was sent from this office on Tuesday last; and, as you have promised to second the Motion of which Mr. Berkeley has given notice, I may as well put you in possession of the facts as far as I know anything of them. You know that in January we sent out from this office a circular of which copies were addressed to our free-trade friends in all parts of the kingdom, suggesting the sending of petitions for immediate repeal. Among many hundreds of replies to that circular was one from Peter Vines of Cheltenham, and of this I enclose a copy. In consequence of the request of Mr. Vines, I ordered copies of the printed form of the South Lancashire petition to be sent to him, with a few of the other Bills he mentions, and we heard no more of the matter until last Tuesday, when we received (I believe by post) a number of sheets containing the signatures, which we had to paste together, and attach the head. Mr. Septimus Pruen, a respectable solicitor of Cheltenham, sent the sheets to us. As Mr. Berkeley is Member of Parliament for the borough, I ordered Mr. Walters, our clerk, to send the petition to him for presentation. I can say nothing as to how the signatures were obtained, except that as Mr. Pruen and Messrs. Bishop and Vines had the management of the matter, I should have had the fullest confidence that all would be done honourably and fairly. I did not expect the sheets to be sent to us, but that the whole would be forwarded direct from Cheltenham to London, as has been done in almost all other cases. I have written to Mr. Pruen to-day, and requested him to inquire into the matter, and to communicate with their M.P. I ought to mention that four or five names which appear on the first sheet were copied from the head of one of the other sheets, and these five names as originally signed were pasted over, and this was done by Mr. Walters by my direction.—I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

"JOSEPH HICKIN."

From this fact had arisen the circumstance that there were only five names on the first sheet, and that they appeared to be written in different ink from the rest, and this was a corroboration of the statement in the letter. The hon. Member for Cheltenham had referred to the case of a gentleman named Perry, whose name appeared in the petition, although he had not signed it. On this subject he (Mr. Bright) had received a letter from Mr. Hennessy, a gentleman connected with the League at Cheltenham, written in consequence of having read what occurred in the House the other night:—

"4, Essex Place, Cheltenham, Feb. 28.

Sir—The hon. C. F. Berkeley is reported in the *Morning Herald* of this date, in presenting a petition from this town on the subject of the Corn Laws in the House of Commons, to have read a letter from his agent, in which the following passage occurs:—'I have seen Mr. Perry, the miller, of Alstone Mill, whose name is to the first sheet; he

says he never heard of it before.' I was present when Mr. Perry signed the petition in question, and believe his signature follows my own. I am sure he will remember it when I name the circumstance to him. I have deemed it right, as you promised to second Mr. Berkeley's Motion for an inquiry on the subject, to put you in possession of the above fact, and believe the other signatures to be genuine. The fact is, no effort was made to obtain signatures to the petition; sheets were in the shops of two tradesmen, and an announcement stating the simple fact appeared in their windows, beyond which no further trouble was taken,—I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN F. HENNESSY.

"J. Bright, Esq., M.P."

He thought it right to state to the House there was no charge against the genuineness of more than five of the signatures. The individual who changed them had acknowledged the fact; and although it was not one of the most prudent or regular things to do, yet it might have been done without any intention to infringe the rules of the House, or to substitute false names. He hoped the House would be satisfied with this explanation, and would not think it necessary to take any further steps; but if they did he would be most happy to second the Motion for a Committee.

MR. FERRAND begged to inquire of the right hon. Gentleman in the chair, whether it would be regular that he should move an Amendment to the Motion of the hon. Member for Cheltenham? He was desirous of asking that question, because he had received a letter from Sheffield in corroboration of the statements which he had made the other night in that House respecting the forgery of signatures to petitions. He had also seen an extract from the *Leeds Intelligencer* to the same effect. He had also a letter from a gentleman who resided in London, and referred him to the engraving which had lately appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, as a perfectly true representation of the manner in which the Anti-Corn-Law Leaguers procured signatures to their petitions. The petition which had been referred to by the last-named paper had been presented by the noble Lord the Member for London; and it had been, in fact, signed by mere children, who had signed their names two or three times over. He had also a letter, which was only a dozen lines, and he would therefore trespass upon the time of the House while he read it. That letter was as follows:—

"If any further information will be of any use to you in your opposition to the Anti-Corn-Law League, I should feel great pleasure in forwarding to you the name of a man who is engaged by the League, and has affixed about 14,000 signatures to one petition from that body. There are twenty persons similarly employed. I also know another case in which 500 names were affixed to a petition by one party before he left the room in which they were written. I have no doubt that many other instances of the same kind may be brought forward."

Having received that letter, he asked for a reference as to the respectability of the writer, and having obtained it, he had had a personal interview with him. He had found his statements correct, and he was proved to support his assertions before a Committee of that House. He begged therefore (if he were permitted to do so) to move as an Amendment, that the Committee be directed to inquire generally into the method of obtaining signatures to petitions adopted by the Anti-Corn-Law League.

LORD J. MANNERS said, that any gentleman who walked the streets of London might afford evidence of the manner in which the signatures to petitions were obtained. He, himself, had happened to be walking down Grosvenor-place the other day, when he heard a comfortable-looking baker's boy say to one of his companions, "I say, old fellow, have you signed the Anti-Corn-Law petition? I have signed it three times." This was not an isolated case, as he believed that parties were in the habit of signing these petitions as often as they happened to pass along the streets in which they were exhibited. Parties were allowed to put down their names as often as they thought proper. He thought some steps should be taken to put an end to this evil, for he witnessed with regret the diminished influence which the petitions of the people now had in that House.

THE SPEAKER said, that it would be more proper for the hon. Member for Knaresborough to move an instruction to the Committee, when it was appointed, to include the subject he had referred to in their inquiry.

MR. C. BERKELEY merely rose to say, in answer to the observations of the hon. Member for Durham, that he viewed with great suspicion any petitions coming to him through Manchester. He had also received a letter from Mr. Hennessy, and without meaning anything offensive to those gentlemen who came from the Emerald Isle, he was disposed to say he was afraid that he had borne out their character for blundering. The postscript of this letter stated that, in reference to the petition, he would find his signature followed that of Mr. Perry, of Alston Mill. He had searched

that petition carefully throughout, and it appeared that Mr. Hennessy's signature was not attached to it all.

Petition referred. The following is the entry on the Votes of the House:—

"Corn Laws.—The Honourable Craven Berkeley, Member for the town of Cheltenham, having in his place called the attention of the House to the circumstances under which a Petition, purporting to be the Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Cheltenham, for a repeal of the Corn Laws, had been transmitted to him, to be presented to the House; and having stated, that he had in consequence made inquiry at Cheltenham, in relation to the said Petition, and could not find any trace of such a Petition having been signed by the inhabitants of Cheltenham whose names are attached to it; the said Petition was delivered in at the Table.—Ordered, That the said Petition be referred to a Select Committee, to inquire into the circumstances under which and the parties by whom the signatures thereto were annexed.

Mr. FERRAND begged leave to move,

"That it be an Instruction to the said Committee, that they do inquire into the method which has been adopted by the Anti-Corn-Law League in obtaining Signatures to Petitions, praying for the total and immediate repeal of the Corn and Provision Laws, to be presented to this House."

He had understood the hon. and gallant Member for Cheltenham to state, that a Mr. Reed had informed him he had not attached his signature to this Cheltenham petition: this person's name must therefore have been forged.

After some conversation this Motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

THANKS TO THE ARMY IN INDIA—VICTORIES OF MOODKEE AND FEROZESHAH.

Sir R. PEEL rose and took his stand at the Table, when

Mr. BRIGHT interposed, and begged leave to present a petition. It purported to be from Reading, and to pray that the House would not vote thanks to the Indian army, as the troops were engaged in an unjust and impolitic warfare.

Sir R. PEEL then spoke as follows: I am about to propose that one of the highest rewards that can be bestowed upon successful valour shall be conferred by this House. I am about to propose that the thanks of the Commons of this great Empire shall be given to the officers and men who recently on the banks of the Sutlej, under very trying circumstances, by their discipline, by their fortitude, by their brilliant valour, have sustained the reputation of their country, and proved themselves worthy of the service to which they belong. And I was prepared, until I was interrupted by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the city of Durham, to believe that it would be impossible that any body of Englishmen could be found, who, seeing what were the circumstances of unprovoked aggression which called forth the exertions of these gallant men—seeing what, in a just cause, was their devotion to the interests of their country—would sign a petition grudging the grateful acknowledgment of courage and devotion which we propose to offer. [*Much cheering.*]

The Resolutions with which I shall conclude will not touch upon any matter of purely political concern, but are framed in conformity with established usage — that usage being consonant with reason and justice. The Resolutions will be confined to the acknowledgment of military skill, ability, and valour; and those who may be disposed, if any there be, to question the policy of the Indian Government, will not be in the slightest degree compromised by giving a ready acquiescence in the Motion I shall submit. However convinced I may be of the justice, the moderation, and the wisdom which have characterized the conduct of my gallant Friend the Governor General, yet I shall studiously abstain, in the observations which I make, from any reference to matters of public policy, excepting such as is necessary to elucidate the military operations which are the subject of the Resolutions I shall move. With the position, with the Government, with the population of the Sikh territory, we have become familiar through events that have occurred within the last few years. The state of the country and the history of the Punjaub are probably well known to all whom I am addressing, from the relation in which we stood towards it, during our operations in the neighbouring county of Affghanistan. The House is probably well aware that by the ability and energy of an individual (Runjeet Sing) supremacy was established by him in the Punjaub; and that for many years, through that ability and energy, he ruled the destinies of that great country, and kept in subjection and subordination a powerful army. Since his death, which took place in the year 1839, the Government of the Punjaub has presented a series of acts of cruelty, of intrigue, of a rapid succession of governors, in consequence of the murder of the predecessor by the successor;

it has exhibited a picture of licentiousness and debauchery so extravagant, that it might be calculated to provokea smile if it were not for the influence such licentiousness and debauchery must exercise over the welfare of millions. The acts of that Government have been mainly directed by that powerful soldiery over which Runjeet Sing established his sway; but which since his death has been in the constant habit of controlling the conduct of the civil authorities, and even of the military commanders, by repeated acts of insubordination, and repeated murders, for the purpose of extorting increased pay. Perhaps the best idea one can give of the anomalous condition of affairs, and of the difficulties of speculating upon any acts that may be committed, or upon any measure that may be resorted to is this—that it is quite clear that the main object of the governors of that country, and of the principal landed proprietors, and chiefs, has been to provoke collision with the British army, not for the purpose of resenting any wrong, or of sustaining the military reputation of their country, but of freeing themselves from subjection to an insubordinate and licentious force, by provoking a conflict with Great Britain, in which that force should fall a sacrifice. That has been the main object, and the strange principle of public policy, that has for some time guided the decisions and regulated the acts of the rulers of the Punjaub. I well know what was the object of my Friend, Sir Henry Hardinge, in undertaking the government of India. He made great sacrifices from a sense of public duty; my gallant Friend held a prominent place in the Councils of Her Majesty: he was, I believe, without any reference to party divisions, held in general esteem in this House, as well by his political opponents as by his political frends. He was regarded by the army of this country as its friend, because he was the friend of justice to all ranks of that army. It was proposed to him at a time of life when, perhaps, ambition is a less powerful stimulus than it might have been at an earlier period—it was proposed to him to relinquish his place in the Councils of his Sovereign—to forego the satisfaction he must have felt at what he could not fail to see, that he was an object of general respect and esteem. He separated himself from that family which constituted the chief happiness of his life, for the purpose of performing a public duty he owed to his Sovereign and his country, by taking the arduous and responsible situation of Chief Governor of our Indian possessions. He went out with a high military reputation. solicitous to establish his fame in connection with our Indian Empire, not by means of conquest, or the exhibition of military skill and valour, but by obtaining for himself a name in the annals of India as the friend of peace, and through the promotion of the social interests and welfare of the inhabitants. It was mainly on account of the military character and high reputation of my gallant Friend that he was enabled to control and keep in check the aspirations of more ardent and impetuous minds bent upon the invasion and conquest of the Punjaub.

The view which my gallant Friend took of the policy to be pursued in regard to the Punjaub, was shortly this: he thought the dominions of the British Crown in India were sufficient for every purpose—that the interests of the Empire would not be promoted by the addition of the Punjaub to the possessions already subject to our own rule. He was determined, therefore, to resist any temptation to territorial aggrandizement. His desire was to see a native Government established in the Punjaub, capable of maintaining its independence, of restoring subordination in the ranks of a great army, composed of men of high natural courage, of great physical strength, accustomed to discipline, and trained to military habits by European officers of distinguished reputation. His wish was, that a Sikh Government should be established. He deprecated the formation of a Mussulman Government, or the domination of any other than Sikh authorities. At the same time that he was determined to resist the temptations to direct aggression, he refused repeated proposals that were made to him to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Punjaub. Although nothing could have been more easy; although but a word from him would have been necessary to induce the Mussulman inhabitants of the Punjaub to rise against the Sikh authorities, who were conducting themselves in a manner so irreconcilable with sound policy or common sense, he resolved steadily to adhere to the line he had chalked out; to abstain from all interference in the domestic affairs of the Punjaub; and to observe literally every obligation of good faith.

But while that was his view of the policy that ought to be pursued, he was not insensible to the danger to which our Indian

Empire was constantly exposed from the maintenance on its frontier of a profligate and debauched Government, controlled by an insubordinate and licentious army. My gallant Friend, therefore, took all precautions. He had to guard a frontier extending on the banks of the Sutlej at least 100 miles. The frontier from Ferozepore to Roopur was at least 100 miles; from Ferozepore to Loodiana about 77 miles. My gallant Friend, cautiously abstaining from the collection of any force on the frontier which could justify aggression, or even remonstrance, on the part of the Lahore Government, took those precautions which would effectually prevent successful attack on their part. At Ferozepore he stationed a force of about 8,000 men, consisting of one European regiment, seven regiments of Native infantry, two regiments of Native cavalry, twenty-four light guns, and had mounted in position at Ferozepore thirty or thirty-five pieces of heavy artillery. He intended this to be the advanced post of the British army on the western side of the frontier. At a distance of about seventy-six miles to the eastward, higher up the Sutlej, at Loodiana, he collected a force of about 5,000 men. My gallant Friend thought that these two armies, or two divisions of an army, stationed about seventy-six miles from each other, acting on the flanks of any force from the Punjaub, induced by caprice or by the temerity of their rulers to invade the British territory, would be sufficient to keep it in effectual control. At a distance more in the interior, namely, at Umballa, he stationed another division of 7,500 men at the least. My gallant Friend was undoubtedly under the impression that it was highly improbable that any attack would be made by the army of the Punjaub upon the British positions. He knew that no conduct on his part could provoke or justify such an attack; and he felt every assurance that could be felt, so far as justice and reason sanctioned the inference, that the army of the Punjaub would not be mad enough to seek a conflict with the British forces on the left bank of the Sutlej.

There were good reasons why my gallant Friend did not keep together for the last two or three years an immense British and native army on the banks of the Sutlej. Constant efforts were made by the Government and by the military leaders of the army of the Punjaub to corrupt our native troops. The constitution of the army of the Punjaub is purely democratic: the private soldiers elect representatives, five in number from each company, to control their officers, to depose them when they think fit, or to subject them to death when it is deemed expedient. The pay of an infantry soldier of the Punjaub is about 25*s.* a month; while the pay of a sepoy in Her Majesty's service is only about 14*s.* or 15*s.* a month. Constant exertions were made, by direct and indirect means, aided by community of language and of religion, to shake the fidelity of the Native troops; but I rejoice to say that they were made without success. The loyalty of the sepoys, with scarcely a single exception, has been untainted. All the offers of a profligate Government and a licentious soldiery were unavailing; but still it was prudent in my gallant Friend not to bring together on the frontier, for an indefinite time and for no specific object, an immense Native force, seeing that within a few miles they would be exposed to the injurious example of a soldiery free from all restraint, and constantly resorting to threats of actual violence towards their leaders. There were, therefore, political reasons for not keeping our troops, as it were, in immediate contact with such an enemy, and there were military reasons equally powerful.

It was, in the first place, impossible, if aggression were intended, to foresee at what point an invasion would be made. On the left bank of the Sutlej were many States belonging to the Punjaub, and some of the chiefs of those States men of doubtful fidelity. In those dominions on the left bank of the Sutlej are many forts of considerable size and strength. A force controlled by no Government, impelled by the fear of losing its pay, or the hope of extorting more, is not governed by ordinary considerations of prudence like the armies of regular States; and if the army of the Punjaub meditated a sudden irruption into the British territory, it was difficult to foresee at what point the descent would be made. Between Ferozepore and Roopur there are not fewer than twenty fords available for the passage of troops; nor is it easy to ascertain their exact position, since, from the nature of the river, they are constantly changing. My gallant Friend, thought, therefore, that true military policy recommended the course he has pursued, not that his whole army should be concentrated on the banks of the Sutlej, but that our territory should be guarded by a sufficient force stationed at Ferozepore and

Loodiana. Seeing the superior force of cavalry in the army of the Punjaub, the desperate rashness of a licentious army not governed by the ordinary rules of conduct, it was within the limit of possibility that a dash might be made at Delhi, or some vital part of the Indian Empire. My gallant Friend, therefore, most wisely and prudently, kept a considerable force at Umballa, seventy-six miles to the south-east from Loodiana, and a still larger body of troops in the neighbourhood of Delhi. This whole force was assembled by way of precaution against the possible attempts of the Lahore army; and it consisted in the whole of not fewer than thirty regiments of Native infantry, of nine regiments of European infantry, of twelve regiments of Native cavalry, and of three regiments of European cavalry. All this was quite consistent with forbearance on the part of the Governor General, and with his determination to be seduced by no temptation to aggression on the enemy.

It is quite clear that my gallant Friend the Governor General did take every precaution to ensure the safety of the British dominions in India, in case of sudden and unprovoked attack. In the early part of the year, at the time when he was occupied with his functions as Governor General, and when it was most material that he should perform them in conjunction with his Council at Calcutta: in a minute, dated on the 16th June, he submitted to the Council his opinion that our relations with the Court of Lahore became so doubtful, that, great as was the inconvenience of separating the Governor General and his Council, it was desirable, with reference exclusively to Indian interests, that he should proceed to the left bank of the Sutlej, in order that on the spot he might be enabled to give such directions as appeared necessary, and which, if given at the distance of a thousand miles, might be inappropriate. The unanimous opinion of the members of the Council was, that it was for the public interest that the Governor General should proceed to join the army; and, in conformity with this advice, in the month of October he took his departure for the left bank of the Sutlej. Up to an early period in December, the opinion of my gallant Friend (Sir Henry Hardinge) was, that there would be no irruption from the right bank of the Sutlej into the British territory. He felt confident that the Sikhs must be convinced that such an attempt could only end in signal defeat, and therefore that it would not be made. So far as he could reason from experience, he had a right to arrive at this conclusion. In 1843 the army of Lahore left the capital and advanced to the Sutlej; but after remonstrance on our part it retired again and abandoned the enterprise. In 1844, exactly the same conduct was observed; the Punjaub army, eager for pay, or for booty, if pay could not be obtained, and, instigated by the Government and the chiefs, appeared to contemplate an irruption; but in 1844, as in 1843, the army withdrew to the interior. Accounts, however, reached my gallant Friend towards the end of November last, which led him to believe that an invasion of the British territory was seriously menaced. The House will find by the Papers recently presented by command of Her Majesty, that on the 20th November, Major Broadfoot addressed a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, and another to the Governor General to this effect:—

Governor General's Agency, Nov. 20, 1845.

"Sir—Since I had the honour of waiting on your Excellency to-day, I have received Lahore letters of the 18th instant (morning). During the night of the 17th, the chiefs had agreed on, and the Durbar had ordered in writing, the following plan of operations. The army was to be divided into seven divisions, one to remain at Lahore, and the rest to proceed against Roopur and our hills, Loodiana, Hurreekee, Ferozepore, and Scinde, while one was to proceed to Peshawur; and a force under Rajah Golab Singh was to be sent to Attock."

The decision then taken by the Lahore Durbar was, that four divisions were to be employed in an attack upon the British territory, but they were not to make a concentrated or simultaneous movement; and the policy of the course adopted by the Governor General was thus demonstrated. The Lahore army, in four divisions, was to make four separate attacks on different points along the river—the first division was to force the eastern extremity of the line; another to attack Loodiana; a third pass the river at Hureekee; and the fourth attack Ferozepore. Those divisions were to consist of about 8,000 men each. The House will see by reference to the Papers laid before them how difficult it was for any person, even the most experienced, to speculate on the decision to which the governing powers at Lahore might arrive. They will see, too, that the Ministers, or those who held the reins of government, spent their days in such continuous drunkenness and debauchery,

that no resolution of theirs could be depended on. An account written by the Agent at Lahore, to the Secretary to Government, dated Umballah, November 21st, founded on information received direct from Lahore, presents this picture of the councils of the Punjaub :—

"The Ranee (that is, the regent, the mother of the infant Maharajah) complained that whilst the troops were urging the march, they were still going home to their villages as fast as they got their pay; and Sirdar Sham Singh Attareewallah declared his belief that unless something was done to stop this, he would find himself on his way to Ferozepore with empty tents. The bait of money to be paid, and to accompany them was also offered, and at length the durbar broke up at two p.m. Great consultations took place in the afternoon; but I know only one result, that the Ranee had to give her lover his formal dismissal, and that he (Rajah Lal Singh) actually went into the camp of the Sawars he is to command, and pitched his tent. What the Ranee says is quite true of the sepoys dispersing to their houses; the whole affair has so suddenly reached its present height, that many of the men themselves think it will come to nothing, and still more who had taken their departure do not believe it serious enough to go back. On the day after this scene took place, *i. e.* the 19th, the usual stream of sepoys, natives of the protected States, who had got their pay, poured across the Sutlej, at Hureekee, on the way to their homes."

There appears also an account of another conversation, in those Papers, which took place between the Raja Lal Sing and Bhaee Ram Sing, one of the principal officers and advisers of the Lahore Government, and who seems to have been the only one of them in whom, from his character and wisdom, the slightest confidence could be placed. In a letter from Lahore, dated the 24th day of November, the following conversation was detailed: Bhaee Ram Sing, addressing Lal Sing, said—

"The English have interfered in no affairs of the Khalsa; what is the wisdom of your making (religious) war at the bidding of the soldiery? None of the nobles have discovered the real intentions of the English. The Governor General's agent, who is a steady friend, has written in the plainest terms, that the English Government desires only friendship like that of the late Maharaja Runjeet Singh; but that if any thing wrong is done by the Sikh army, the rulers of the kingdom will be held responsible, for rulers must account for the acts of their troops and subjects. Be cautious how you march to Hureekee with the troops.' The Rajah said, 'Bhaee Sahib, what can I do? if I remain, the soldiery seize me by the throat.'"

In a word, the councils of the durbar seem to have been shifting from day to day, and no one could speculate with any degree of confidence as to the probable result.

On the 9th of December, the Governor General, thinking our relations with the Punjaub very critical, and that it was desirable to take every precaution against any sudden irruption, gave orders that the division of troops at Umballah, consisting of 7,500 men, should move towards the Sutlej. On December 11, the very day on which the Lahore army crossed the Sutlej, the British and Native troops of that division were on their march from Umballah to the frontier. The whole proceedings of the Governor General and the Commander in Chief, subsequently to that day, as well as before it, were characterized by the greatest prudence, skill, and foresight. From Umballah the troops marched to a place called Buseean, where, owing to the prudent precautions of the Governor General, they found an ample supply of food and stores. It was resolved that a junction should be effected with the Loodiana division, and that it would be better to incur some risk at Loodiana, rather than forego the advantage of a junction with the Loodiana division of the army. Those troops advanced accordingly towards Ferozepore, and learned by the way that the army of Lahore, amounting to not less than 60,000 men, had crossed the river, and were prepared to attack the British army. The expectations of the Governor General were entirely justified by the result. There were in Ferozepore 7,500 men, 35 heavy guns in position, and 24 pieces of field artillery, in addition to the heavy ordnance. The army of Lahore shrunk from the attack of so formidable a post, and Ferozepore was entirely safe, according to the anticipations which had been entertained by the Governor General. The army of Lahore, not venturing to attack Ferozepore, determined to give battle to the British forces on their march from Umballah, and on the 18th of December made a sudden attack on them. On that day the troops had reached Moodkee, after having marched 150 miles by forced marches. The men were suffering severely from want of water, and from exhaustion, and yet such was their discipline and gallantry, that they repelled the whole of the attacking army, though greatly superior to them in number, defeating a force treble their amount, and succeeding in the capture of 17 of their guns. The army of Lahore, thus repulsed by our forces advancing from Umballah, retired within very formidable entrenchments at Ferozeshah. Those entrenchments, consisting of strong breastworks, were in the form of a parallelogram, of which the opposite faces were a

mile, and half a mile in length respectively. In the face of those formidable works, protected by 150 guns of heavy calibre and excellent workmanship, and defended by near 60,000 men, the Governor General, and the Commander in Chief determined to effect a junction with the division of the army which was stationed at Ferozepore. The troops advanced accordingly within three miles of the enemy's position, and manœuvred on his left flank; but the Commander in Chief having given previous notice to Sir J. Littler, made a march to his left, and on the 21st December effected a junction with the Ferozepore division, which thus gave an addition of 7,500 men. At this time there remained but three hours to sunset. It was resolved, however, to attack the position of the enemy. My gallant friend (the Governor General) offered his services as second in command, services which were cheerfully and promptly accepted by the Commander-in-Chief. Determined not to wait till next morning, the instant they effected their junction with the division under Sir John Littler, the commanders resolved to make an attack upon the entrenched camp. The result, Sir, of that attack proved the valour of our European and Indian forces in a pre-eminent degree, and has entitled them to the warmest acknowledgments of this House and of the country. The night of the 21st December was one of the most memorable in the military annals of the British Empire. The enemy were well defended within strongly fortified entrenchments—their guns were served with the greatest precision, and told on our advancing columns with great effect. The right of the British army was led by the Commander-in-Chief, whilst the left centre was headed by Sir H. Hardinge. Our forces made an attack on the enemy's camp during the three hours which as yet remained of daylight; but they had not sufficient time to complete that victory, which was gloriously achieved on the following day. The British army, however, made good their attack, and occupied a part of the enemy's camp. In the middle of the night the camp took fire, and further conflict was for a time suspended in consequence; but as soon as it had ceased the army of Lahore brought forward their heavy artillery, and poured a most destructive fire upon our troops. The details of those occurrences have been given with admirable clearness in the despatches of both commanders; but there have been private letters received which speak of them with less of formality, and perhaps give truer and more faithful accounts of these actions than the official documents. Perhaps the House will excuse me if I read an extract from a private letter from the Governor General to a member of his own family. The right hon. Baronet then read as follows:—

"The night of the 21st was the most extraordinary of my life. I bivouacked with the men, without food or covering, and our nights are bitter cold. A burning camp in our front, our brave fellows lying down under a heavy cannonade, which continued during the whole night, mixed with the wild cries of the Sikhs, our English hurrah, the tramp of men, and the groans of the dying. In this state, with a handful of men, who had carried the batteries the night before, I remained till morning, taking very short intervals of rest by lying down with various regiments in succession, to ascertain their temper, and revive their spirits."

My gallant Friend, as you see, spent that eventful night passing from regiment to regiment, cheering the men by his own example of constancy and courage—doing all that human means could do to ensure victory to our arms. "I found," my gallant Friend goes on to say—"I found myself again with my old friends of the 29th, 31st, 50th, and 9th, all in good heart"—(regiments with which he had served in the Peninsula)—and with them that regiment which has earned immortal fame in the annals of the British army—Her Majesty's 80th Regiment—

"My answer to all and every man was, that we must fight it out, attack the enemy vigorously at daybreak, beat him, or die honourably in the field. The gallant old general, kindhearted, and heroically brave, entirely coincided with me."

Let the House observe how anxious my gallant Friend is to do justice to his companions in arms.

"During the night I occasionally called on our brave English soldiers to punish the Sikhs when they came too close and were impudent; and when morning broke we went at it in true English style. Gough was on the right. I placed myself, and dear little Arthur [his son] by my side, in the centre, about thirty yards in front of the men, to prevent their firing, and we drove the enemy without a halt from one extremity of the camp to the other, capturing thirty or forty guns as we went along, which fired at twenty paces from us, and were served obstinately. The brave men drew up in an excellent line, and cheered Gough and myself as we rode up the line, the regimental colours lowering to me as on parade. The mournful part is the heavy loss I have sustained in my officers. I have had ten aides-de-camp *hors de combat*, five killed and five wounded. The fire of grape was very heavy from 100 pieces of cannon; the Sikh army, drilled by French officers, and the men the most warlike in India."

From my affectionate regard for that gallant man, I am proud to be enabled to exhibit him on such a night as that of the 21st of December—going through the camp—passing from regiment to regiment—keeping up the spirits of the men—encouraging them—animating their ardour—and having lost ten aides-de-camp out of twelve—placing his young son, a boy of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in the front of the line, in order that the British troops might be induced not to fire on the enemy, but drive them back by the force of the British bayonet. It was characteristic of the man to read these details. He had two sons present, one of whom was a civilian, and the other in the army. On the night of the 21st, he sent the civilian to the rear of the army, saying that his presence disturbed him, and that if he refused to retire, he would send him away in arrest a prisoner; but the presence, he said, of his younger son, an officer, whose duty called him to the field, only made the father more desperately resolute in the discharge of his duty. On the 22nd, after the battle was over, he took his eldest son, when visiting the sepoys and the wounded, and he showed them a Governor General of India who had lost his hand, and the son of a Governor General who had lost his foot, and endeavoured to console them in their sufferings by proving to them that men in the highest rank were exposed to the same casualties as themselves.

As I before observed, the accounts of all the military operations are given with admirable clearness in the despatches laid before the House. They must have been read with such attention by every Member of the House, that I will not weaken their effect by minute reference to military details. The pride and satisfaction we must all derive from those gallant exploits are no doubt counterbalanced by deep regret for the loss of so many men of the highest distinction and promise. We have had the misfortune—the great misfortune—of losing that gallant officer who on former occasions has so frequently distinguished himself—Sir Robert Sale. He, Sir, has closed a long career of glory by that death to which I believe he himself looked forward and which he coveted—that death in the field which entitles me to say that, even in his own estimation, he was "*felix etiam opportunitate mortis.*" Sir, I do hope that this House will on no distant day mark their esteem and respect for the memory of Sir Robert Sale by humbly representing to Her Majesty their unanimous wish that She may be pleased to record the gratitude of the country by the erection of a monument to Sir Robert Sale.

We have, Sir, also, to deplore the loss of Sir J. M'Caskill, to whom a brief but touching testimony of approbation is borne in the despatch of the Commander-in-Chief, as well as of one of the most eminent men in the civil and military services of India—Major Broadfoot. In that gentleman the highest confidence was placed by every one who came in contact with him. He obtained the applause of every civil and military authority in the country, and his prudence and skill as a civilian were only equalled by his ardour and bravery in the field. He was, I believe, the last of three brothers, all of whom have died in the service of their country on the field of battle. Major Broadfoot was present with Sir R. Sale during the siege of Jellalabad, and took a most conspicuous part in its defence. It is mournful, Sir, that we should have to deplore the loss in the same conflict of two gallant men so devoted to their country's service as Sir R. Sale and Major Broadfoot.

I shall not refer by name to officers of lower rank who have fallen in this conflict; for where all were so distinguished, it must be invidious to particularize; but whatever their rank, I can assure their surviving relatives that their country will do justice to their memory. I hope the thanks of the House will be conveyed to all the men of every regiment engaged in this brilliant exploit, without exception. If there were occasions on which the reputation for valour of some regiments may appear not to have been upheld, considering their former services — their known gallantry—their severe losses—the remembrance of one moment's default is altogether obliterated by the recollection of their former eminent conduct, and of the services they rendered on that very day. I am quite certain, Sir, that the men of Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, of the 14th Native Infantry, and the other gallant Native regiment on the flank of Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, will not suffer in the estimation of the country; that the willing thanks of this House will be given, without exception, to all the regiments engaged in this action.

I hope, Sir, there will be an unanimous acquiescence in this vote of thanks to the European and Indian army. I trust I

have said nothing that can provoke discussion or dissent in any quarter of the House. There is nothing in the Resolution to which any man—whatever may be his opinions as to the policy of the Governor General—can object. Let us on this occasion keep political and party differences altogether in the background. Let us all, without any division of political party, concur in bearing testimony to the brilliant services of men so worthy of the name of Englishmen. There never has been a greater example of extreme forbearance, strict justice, and a resolve to resist all the temptations to which the army was exposed—there never was a greater combination of those high qualities with the most brilliant talent and valour in defence of the British empire in India. The gallantry of those who fell in that conflict will not be without its fruits. Their lives will not have been sacrificed in vain. The remembrance of their conduct constitutes one of the brightest possessions—one of the great defences of this country. When we reflect what can be effected by discipline and valour, such as was manifested by our countrymen on these memorable days, we feel that in a just cause our country must be victorious. The memory of those men who have fallen through their devotion to their country will long serve to animate the British army. It will make us proud of that name which we bear, and encourage us, if need be, to emulate their heroic exertions, and exhibit equal devotion, equal perseverance, equal courage, in the cause of our common country. [*Great and enthusiastic cheering greeted the right hon. Baronet from all sides of the House in the progress, and at the conclusion, of his speech.*] He moved the first of the following series of Resolutions :—

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Right honourable Lieutenant General Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor General of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, for the energy and ability with which he directed the military means at his disposal, to the repelling of the unprovoked invasion by the Sikh army of the dominions of the British Government, and of the Protected States upon the left bank of the Sutlej; and also, for the firmness and gallantry with which he directed the operations of that portion of the army under his immediate command, in the afternoon and night of December 21st, 1845, and on the morning of the 22nd, upon which occasion the enemy's defences were carried by storm, the greater part of their artillery captured, and their subsequent attempts to regain what they had lost repeatedly defeated.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to General Sir Hugh Gough, Baronet, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, Commander in Chief of the Forces in the East Indies, for the distinguished valour with which he directed and led the several attacks upon the enemy, and for the eminent services rendered by him in the battles of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd of December, 1845, displaying, as he did, in conjunction with the Governor General, a brilliant example to the troops, of perseverance and courage in critical circumstances, and of irresistible ardour in the several attacks made upon the enemy.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to Major General Sir Henry George Smith, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, to Major General Walter Raleigh Gilbert, and to Major General Sir John Hunter Littler, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, and to the several Officers, European and Native, under their command, for the eminent services rendered by them in the recent arduous and successful operations.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Non-Commissioned Officers and Private Soldiers, European and Native, for the perseverance and fortitude maintained by them at Moodkee on the 18th of December, 1845, and for the daring valour with which they forced the enemy's entrenchments at Ferozeshah on the 21st and 22nd of December, captured most of his guns, and finally compelled the Sikh Army, of greatly superior numbers, to retire within their own frontier.

"That this Resolution be signified to them by the Commanders of the several Corps."

"*Ordered*—That the said Resolutions be transmitted by Mr. Speaker to the Governor General of India, and that he be requested to communicate the same to the several Officers referred to therein."

LORD J. RUSSELL said: Agreeing entirely as I do in the Resolutions which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to move, I trust he will allow me the gratification of seconding the Motion. I participate in the feelings he has expressed on behalf of the House, and I trust with him that it will come to an unanimous decision, that we may offer a tribute to the valour of those who have fought for this country in India, which may be a source of pride to the survivors of these bloody engagements, and some consolation to the afflicted relatives of those who have fallen. With respect to the former part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, I do not intend to follow him farther than to say this; I feel assured that when Sir H. Hardinge accepted the post of Governor General of India, when he abandoned an honourable position in the Councils of his Sovereign, when he left the enjoyments of his happy home, he did so from the highest and most patriotic motives. With respect to the policy which Sir H. Hardinge, as Governor General, has pursued as to the Punjaub, it is highly interesting to hear the statement of that policy which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman. But as I am im-

perfectly informed upon that subject, the Papers having been but recently delivered, and they giving not a full account of that policy; and as these Resolutions contain, besides, nothing that pledges the House in any manner respecting that policy, I think it will be more fitting and becoming my position not to presume to offer any opinion whatever on this subject. This I know, if the utmost forbearance has been shown, as forbearance has been shown on this occasion, then we are free from the imputation of wanton aggression; more especially is this the case, when we consider the character of Sir H. Hardinge; a man whose military fame was already established, placed in command of an immense army, where his predecessor had distinguished himself by conquest, there was a wish and desire on his part to confine himself as far as possible to the territory already acquired, and to give no cause for the interruption of friendly relations with any of the neighbouring States. This is a feeling and a policy highly honourable to the Governor General, though it cannot be denied that that policy of forbearance has exposed the British army, in very disproportionate numbers, to the attack of the army of Lahore. When the action took place at Moodkee, I believe there were not more than 12,500 or 13,000 men altogether to encounter the attack of a force amounting to not less than three times that number. But the spirit of the Governor General and the spirit of the troops he commanded, far from quailing at the sight of his superior force, only kindled into greater determination. There was not a man amongst them, who on that day I will venture to say "wished for more men from England!" In the subsequent battle which the right hon. Gentleman has described, and with respect to which he has given so affecting an account from a letter of the Governor General, I must say I follow with delight the triumph of our arms on that occasion. I see that, on this occasion, as on so many others, it is no advantage gained by our greater civilization, or by the superior number of troops brought into the field, for great indeed was our inferiority in that respect, and vast the superiority of the artillery of the enemy's force; but the advantage was gained by the British army, directed by skill and determination, and by the soldiers of the Indian and native forces, who have been most faithful and courageous. By that army was the victory achieved; and the gallant men who led it could have had no cause for hesitation or distrust, either in themselves or the companions with whom they were associated. Sir H. Gough could not but recollect the brilliant conduct of Sir H. Hardinge at the battle of Albuera; and Sir H. Hardinge could not but remember at the no less bloody battle of Barossa, the most distinguished behaviour of Sir Hugh Gough. They must then have had the utmost confidence in each other, as well as in themselves, when they led their gallant men to victory. Sir, I was glad to hear the allusion the right hon. Gentleman made to the 62d Regiment. I am induced to believe that that regiment could not have retired from any cause but the great carnage that had taken place in its ranks, rendering its strength unequal to the task that had been assigned it; I feel confident that, like the other regiments of the British army, if it shall be entrusted with a task to which its power is equal, it will be seen maintaining the high character which it has in former days acquired. I likewise rejoice to hear that the right hon. Gentleman means to propose an address from this House to Her Majesty, enabling Her Majesty to cause a monument to be erected to the memory of Sir R. Sale. That gallant officer, after the distinction he had acquired, could wish for no more glorious death than a death on the field of battle. But it would indeed be unworthy of us, if we did not show that we appreciate, and most fully appreciate, the devotion he has exhibited, not only formerly at Jellalabad, but in his anxiety to return to India afterwards to take part in the military operations there. With these feelings, therefore, I ask for the honour of seconding the Motion the right hon. Gentleman has proposed; and I trust, as I have already said, that our decision will be unanimous, and that we shall show that the qualities these brave and gallant men have exhibited, the dangers they have confronted, and the victory they have achieved, have met with a response in the gratitude of an English House of Commons.

MR. HUME concurred entirely in the Vote; but he was anxious to make a few observations, because it had been stated elsewhere that the Commander-in-Chief had been surprised, and that, in consequence the victory was gained with a greater loss to the army than might have occurred. He believed that great caution had been displayed by the Governor Gene-

ral; and he attributed that caution to the probability of the Sikhs becoming the aggressors. Not even those on the spot, and those to whom the most accurate information was available, had any expectation of the occurrence of events by which recently all and every one had been startled. He had had the opportunity of seeing a letter from a political agent employed by the Government, in which it was stated that, notwithstanding the perplexing events and rumours of what was occurring in the durbar at Lahore, it was not believed that the aggression would so soon and so decidedly be made. It was a very natural explanation of Sir Henry Hardinge's unwillingness to advance his forces, to say that he feared that by such a course he might give grounds for an attack by first having given offence to the enemy, and not a less natural and not less convincing explanation was that offered by the right hon. Baronet. If hon. Members took the map of India and studied the locality in which the events in question had occurred —if they made themselves familiar with the situation, the novel situation, in which the English commanders had been placed, they would see that it had been a matter of utter impossibility, by any skill or any manœuvres, to concentrate the necessary forces in the position in which, if concentrated, they could act with the most effect. Looking to the fact that there were no fords at Roopur to which the British had access, that there was the chance of Loodiana being attacked, and no stations within the distance of seventy miles, he (Mr. Hume) did not think it possible that there could have been a better position than that taken up at Umballah. The troops that marched from Umballah were able, in any part of the country between Loodiana and Ferozepore, to give their services. He deplored as much as any man the disasters attendant on war, and he should regret if there had been, in the present case, any unnecessary sacrifice of human life; but there were circumstances when war was unavoidable—when entering upon it was commendable; and, taking into consideration the events which preceded the late contest, the two attacks made in the winters of 1843 and 1844, when threats of hostility, partially carried into effect, had been made to the Governor General—there was, in his (Mr. Hume's) opinion, nothing to deplore in the motives which actuated the Governor General in entering upon the war. He trusted that the vote of thanks would be no less cordially than unanimously passed; and, while giving it, it would be well to recollect the necessity and the justice of making every consideration for the families of those who had so gloriously fallen. Soldiers, as all knew, were generally not affluent men; and when the support which their exertions gave to their families was taken away, great misery and misfortune ensued. The humblest had, none could doubt, done their duty as well and as nobly as had the bravest; and he trusted that the Government would extend its patronage to the promoting of the welfare of those who had been bereaved by their sacrifices for the country. The House would rejoice in recording the distinguished services of Sir Robert Sale in a suitable manner, and would not feel less gratification in the acknowledgment of the abilities and valour of the other distinguished officers; but let the House bear in mind that all who fell were equally worthy, and that, proportionably, all had equal claims on the gratitude of their countrymen. He also trusted, that the time was not distant when the right hon. Gentleman would be enabled to lay before the House the correspondence that took place between the seat of Government in India, and our different allies and enemies during the last three or four years —not that it could affect what had now taken place, but that they might in future have the means of arriving at something like a just conclusion as to the policy pursued on different occasions by the Governors General.

Sir R. H. INGLIS also wished to take his share in paying a humble and heartfelt tribute for the great and eminent services which the Indian army had accomplished. At the same time he desired to take advantage of some expressions which had been used by the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), to recall to his recollection, and to that of the House, certain passages in the despatch of Sir H. Hardinge, and in his proclamation, to which hitherto no allusion had been made. "Let us," said the hon. Member, "not thank the officers and army alone; let us imitate Sir H. Hardinge himself, who, in his despatch to the President and Council announcing the victory, in the most solemn manner, desired England and India to recollect by whom that victory was achieved; that it was not in the strength of his own arm he had been saved, but "it was thine arm, and thy right hand, and the light of

thy countenance, because thou hadst favour unto us." He accused no man of forgetting or overlooking this; but he desired that the House might take advantage of the expressions of Sir H. Hardinge himself, to recognise Him who was the giver of all victory, and, while they thanked the instrument, not to forget Him from whom alone victory came. He would also say a word on the conduct of Sir Henry Hardinge. The only objection which had been urged against the policy of Sir Henry Hardinge was, that he did not anticipate the outbreak of the Sikh army. For his part, he would rather that Sir H. Hardinge had been taken by surprise in a defensive war, than to have precipitated himself, and wantonly, into a war of aggression. The utmost offence Sir H. Hardinge had been guilty of was, that he himself, a soldier of the highest character, and requiring no additional feat of arms to raise him in the esteem of his country, could not believe that, unconscious as he was of any hostile intention on the part of others, he should be unprovokedly attacked. The chief consolation that he (Sir R. H. Inglis) derived from a survey of the Papers on the Table of the House was, that in the state of utter demoralization in which the court and camp of Lahore appeared to have been placed, it was not very probable that any more serious war than that which he hoped had now terminated, would be likely to revive. He believed that the annals of even the Roman Empire, in its latter days, could produce no sensuality more debasing and degrading than that which seemed to have reigned in the camp of Lahore. And when he found how intoxicated they had been, and how, defeated whilst under that intoxication, they had been sent back to their own country, he entertained a hope that the success of our arms would be complete, and lead to the restoration of tranquillity. If there were any thing that struck him more than another in the despatches of Sir Henry Hardinge and the Commander-in-Chief, it was the plain English soldierlike statements of all that took place. He hardly liked to allude to the composition of any other man; but he would say that Sir Henry Hardinge, himself a great general, had rather condescended to follow the Duke of Wellington, and not attempted to imitate any foreign commander. The hon. Baronet concluded by observing that such testimony as that which had been offered by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government to the Indian army, supported as it was by each side of the House, was most complete, and he cordially agreed in the Motion.

Mr. HOGG hoped that the situation he had the honour to hold in the service of the East India Company, would be deemed an adequate excuse for his venturing to address the House, after the eloquent and well-merited eulogies on our troops and their commanders, that had been pronounced by the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord. Eventful as India had been in desperate struggles, the conflicts of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd December were, perhaps, the severest we had ever been engaged in. Never before had we encountered an enemy so brave and so resolute; and the frightful carnage on both sides, marked the desperation of the conflict. The Sikhs had well-founded confidence in their valour and their numbers; and that confidence was increased by the strength of their position, and the overwhelming force of their artillery. The British troops did not amount to one-third the number of the Sikhs, although the combined movement for the concentration of our forces had been planned with the greatest skill, and executed with the most eminent success; and every soldier from Umballah, and all the stations in advance, was in the ranks. Our inferiority in artillery was still greater, and when assailing a fortified camp, more appalling. We had little more than half their number of guns, chiefly six-pounders, and scarcely any of them exceeding nine-pounders; while the enemy had upwards of 100 guns, and, as Sir Hugh Gough stated, "forty of them of battering calibre." The Sikhs defended their position with desperate courage, while our troops advanced in the face of a storm of shot and shell, that literally mowed down their ranks; still they advanced with unflinching steadiness till they assailed and gained the intrenched camp of the Sikhs, capturing their guns and munitions of war, and accomplishing every object which Sir Henry Hardinge and Sir Hugh Gough had in view. Our loss was great; but in a conflict so desperate and unequal, how could it be otherwise? Most truly did he (Mr. Hogg) sympathize in the feelings of regret, and the tribute of admiration, so elegantly expressed by the right hon. Baronet. He was truly gratified to hear that it was the intention of Government to record the nation's gratitude, by erecting a monument to the memory of that distin-

guished and gallant man, Sir Robert Sale. He had also to deplore the loss of Major Broadfoot, one of the most distinguished public servants in India, eminent alike for his talents and his services as a soldier and a civilian. Many others had fallen, who had run a short but brilliant career; and who, if their lives had been spared, would have been equally distinguished in the service of their country. He would abstain from entering upon the policy of the Governor General, or touching upon any topics likely to create discussion. He would, however, be permitted to say, that Sir H. Hardinge would have had little to apprehend, and comparatively little danger and difficulty to encounter, if the Lahore Government had openly declared their hostile intentions, instead of making a treacherous and unprovoked attack, while they professed a desire to maintain uninterrupted their friendly relations. Sir H. Hardinge would then have been justified, before India and this country, in calling forth the military resources of the Indian empire, for the purposes of aggression or defence, and the result would neither have been distant nor dubious. But what were the circumstances in which he was placed? He had maintained friendly relations with the Lahore Government for nearly forty years, under a Treaty that had never been violated by the Sikhs. The Sikh Government professed an anxious desire to continue these friendly relations, and lamented their inability to control their insurbordinate soldiery. Would it have become the generosity, would it have become the justice of the Indian Government, to have seized upon the difficulties of the Lahore Government as a pretext for invading the country and overthrowing the Government? The Indian Government were bound by good faith to abstain from all interference, and to observe a strictly pacific course, evinced by pacific bearing and conduct. He admitted, that it was, at the same time, necessary to make such defensive arrangements as the vicinity of a large body of mutinous troops might render necessary. It was no easy matter to combine these conflicting duties; but he thought that a perusal of the Papers on the Table, would show that Sir H. Hardinge had eminently succeeded in doing so. No man could read his despatches, and mark his conduct and policy, without admitting that his feelings and intentions were honestly pacific; and that he had no desire for personal or territorial aggrandizement. Well did he remember what fell from his right hon. Friend, on the occasion of a farewell entertainment given to him by the Court of Directors, before his quitting England. He adverted to his military life, and said with great simplicity, but in a touching manner, "I am a soldier, and have seen and known the risks and vicissitudes of war; but believe me, that therein you have the guarantee that I am a lover and shall be a maintainer of peace;" and most truly, and honourably, had Sir H. Hardinge acted up to his professions. It would be easy to pursue still further the observations made by the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), with regard to the nature of our frontier—that frontier a river abounding in ferries and fords, with only two military posts, distant from each other nearly eighty miles; the intermediate country in the possession of the Lahore Government, or its feudatories, commanding both banks of the river, with its ferries and fords—the British Government having no military possession of it, and no right to land troops there. We talked familiarly of "the left bank" of the Sutlej, and of "our bank" of the Sutlej. We had no bank, and no territory within 100 miles of the bank. With the exception of a few specks, the whole territory between the Sutlej and Jumna, comprising an area of about 20,000 square miles, with a population of nearly 2,000,000, was entirely Sikh. It was true that many of the States were nominally under our protection; but the whole population was Sikh in religious feelings, and predilections, and looked to the Government of Lahore as their head. In that vast territory, we had not a bit of land as big as that Table, in advance of Umballah. In 1809, a Treaty was entered into with Runjeet Sing, whereby many of the Sikh States on the left bank of the Sutlej were declared to be under British protection, while the others remained under the protection of Lahore. The object of that Treaty was to arrest the progress of Runjeet Sing, who was bound thereby to respect the rights of the States on the left banks of the Sutlej. Our protection was merely nominal. We abstained from all interference, and did not even exact any tribute. In the Treaty, there was no list of the States respectively under Sikh and British protection; and matters remained in this vague and undefined state until 1826, when Runjeet Sing laid claim to forty-seven petty States. No fresh treaty was then made; but after some correspond-

ence the whole of these States, except three, were conceded to him; and from that time, his influence on the left bank of the Indus was almost supreme, and his control over both the banks of the river, and over all the ferries and fords, was complete. It was now needless to discuss whether such concession was politic, or not. But such was the fact, and neither the present nor the late Government of India was responsible for the results. In 1809, when the Treaty with Runjeet Sing was entered into, we had no British post within the Sikh States, except Loudianah. In 1835, Ferozepore lapsed to us by failure of heirs: the Government at that time considered the expediency of constructing new works there, but abstained from doing so, fearing that it might give umbrage to the Lahore Government. At that time, the nearest military post to Loudianah was Khurnaul, distant about 140 miles. During the lifetime of Runjeet Sing, no danger arose from this strange and anomalous state of our frontier. But on the death of that remarkable man in 1839, it became obvious that measures must eventually be adopted for the protection of British interests in that quarter. We were, however, at that time in possession of Affghanistan, and our position in the rear of the Sikhs was strong, commanding the Punjaub, and rendering unnecessary the adoption of any immediate measures. But when we withdrew from Affghanistan, the state of affairs was altered, and the necessity for such measures became urgent. Accordingly both Ferozepore and Loudianah were then strengthened, and their garrisons greatly increased, by order of Lord Ellenborough, then Governor General. Further and more important measures of precaution were at the same time adopted. Our reserve station, which had hitherto been at Khurnaul, was removed to Umballah, which had lapsed to the British Government, and was fifty-four miles in advance of Khurnaul; and two stations were at the same time formed on the hills for the reception of two European regiments. We had no territory nearer the river than Umballah, and our reserve station could not have been placed more in advance. But, he asked, would it have been prudent to have placed our reserve further in advance, if we had had a position at our command? He concluded that it would not. He was not versed in military tactics; but it was obvious, on inspection of the map, that, by having our reserve at Umballah, our forces could move to the relief either of Ferozepore or Loodianah; which places, be it remembered, were eighty miles apart. What, he asked, would have been the consequence, if the reserve had been advanced near the banks of the river? The Sikhs might have crossed the river at Roopur, to the east of Loudianah—might have threatened, if not taken, Delhi, before our reserve could have heard of the movement of the enemy. He was anxious to show that the former Government of India were not unobservant of the weakness of our frontier, and that every prudent and practicable precaution had from time to time been adopted, as the exigency required. What, it might be asked, had been done by Sir Henry Hardinge to prepare for the threatened emergency? His measures, it was true, were not trumpeted and blazoned forth in the papers. Every precaution he deemed necessary was executed cautiously and noiselessly. His object was gradually to strengthen the frontier stations without attracting public observation, or incurring the risk of giving umbrage to the Government of Lahore; and this he accomplished with consummate judgment and skill. He selected the season of the year when the general reliefs periodically take place; and by a series of orders, quiet, judicious, and noiseless, he accomplished most fully the object he had in view. Ferozepore, Loudianah, Umballah, and all the frontier stations were greatly strengthened; and when he himself proceeded up the country, there were not less than 40,000 troops, including upwards of 10,000 Europeans, at Meerut and the stations in advance. It was impossible for those connected with the Government of India to have viewed without feelings of uneasiness, an army close to our frontier, dictating to their commanders and the Government, and exacting from the treasury whatever contributions they chose to demand. This organized and apparently successful mutiny held forth an alarming example to our native troops, whose fidelity was assailed by the most prodigal offers, and by every inducement that could influence their religious prejudices, which operate with them much more strongly than their personal interests; but, he thanked God! in vain. It was also to be borne in mind, that the Sikhs recruit their army to a considerable extent from our provinces; and doubtless there were in their ranks numerous relatives and friends of our sepoys, whose fidelity and devotion

remained unshaken, amid temptations to which no soldiers had ever before been exposed. It was to be hoped that the defeat of this, the largest and the bravest army that had ever been assembled in India, would tend to impress more firmly on the minds of the native princes, how vain must be all attempts to overthrow our power, or oppose the resistless valour of our troops. He hoped it would also teach them to be thankful for the blessing of British rule, and with it of British protection, when they contemplated the horrors and desolation that must have marked the progress of the Sikh army; if, unopposed by British arms, they had proceeded on their course, ravaging the plains and plundering the cities of Hindostan. He hoped that such reflections would have due weight with the native princes, and that our empire in the East would be consolidated in the manner which alone could tend to its permanence, by a consciousness prevailing throughout all India, that British rule tended to the happiness, prosperity, and safety of the natives of that country.

CAPTAIN LAYARD said, great actions, gallant performances, and heroic deeds were often lost to the page of history, either by the want of a poet or the neglect of the historian. But the friends of those gallant spirits whose lives had been offered up at the shrine of their country, neither they nor those gallant warriors who happily still remained to maintain its honour and its glory, need fear for a moment that such would be the case on the present occasion; but no doubt would rest assured, that after the beautiful and soul-stirring speech of the Prime Minister, that their deeds and their glory would be heralded down to all time. It was for the House to consider if its thanks were due to the army and its leaders who had so lately fought those desperate conflicts which had taken place on the banks of the Sutlej. An army brought up by forced marches, in want of food and water, greatly inferior to the adversary in number and artillery—such was the state of our force. The Sikhs being the finest army ever brought together in India by a native Power—an army which had been for years formed under the genius of a great warrior, Runjeet Singh, the Lion of Lahore, and disciplined for years by French officers—an army as gallant as was ever brought into the field; with the finest artillery, to which our own could not be compared in number. The stake, not if one battle was to be fought, and defeat unhappily followed, easily to be recovered—far from it. It was his firm conviction, that if we had met a defeat, the fortunes of our Indian empire would have been to the utmost perilled. The armies had met, the din of battle was over, the struggle had been arduous, but the victory was won. He could not paint the picture, but he quoted from that great poet who could:—

"As the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host with its banner at sunset was seen;
As the leaves of the forest, when autumn has blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown;
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But from it there rolled not the breath of his pride."

To whom did we owe that that brave host lay withered and strown? Why, under God's good providence, we owed it to those gallant leaders—to those valiant troops, native and European, whose deeds should be for ever inscribed on the tablet of fame, and to whom our warmest thanks and gratitude weve assuredly due. But, alas! all military success dims the eye that brightens up at its glory with the tear that rises for the loss of the valiant and the good; and, assuredly, few bright passages of arms, few brilliant successes, had left more reason to deplore a great and grievous loss. The gallant Sale, the hero of a hundred fights, was no more. It was said that when the Duke of Wellington heard he was killed, he said he always expected it. It was always to be expected; for, in the thickest of the fight, in the heart of danger and difficulty, Sir Robert Sale was to be found. He leaves a name as bright as any inscribed on the page of history. He lived honoured and beloved—he died in the arms of victory. The gallant Somerset is no more. And those who knew him, as he did, could wish nothing higher to be said than what had been so eloquently expressed by the Governor General in his despatch. He died exhibiting the hereditary courage of his race—one more of that gallant and lamented list; for, though cut off in the spring time of youth, it was a spring of such bright and early promise, that those who knew and loved the talented and gallant man, felt a sure and steadfast hope, that, if spared, he would have been an honour and an ornament to his country. Thousands, equally gallant, no more shall

behold the country of their birth—no more shall gladden the sight of their friends. But those who deplore them as a loss to their country, and those who weep over them as near and dear to them from the ties of kindred and affection, have this consolation—they died in a just cause—they died in the arms of victory—they shed their blood in the service of a grateful and admiring country. The Governor General has proved himself a great and a gallant leader, beloved by the soldier, exposing himself to every hardship and danger; to the other officers he believed equal praise was due. The brightest diamond might be sullied by a breath: in the greatest successes some errors might be observed. But the House ought to show at once that the Indian army had in their opinion maintained the brightness of their reputation, and by an unanimous vote of thanks show to the world that we had every reason to be thankful and proud of the gallant actions they have performed. For his own part, he thanked his gallant brethren in arms for their bravery and fortitude, and from the inmost recesses of his soul he congratulated them upon their brilliant achievements.

Sir H. DOUGLAS said, it was a happy circumstance, gratifying to the public feeling of the country, that the victories for which we were about to return thanks had been the fruits of no aggressive act on our part; and it would be consolatory to the grief of the nation, and to that of those individuals more intimately concerned, that the tremendous sacrifice of valuable lives which had taken place, had not been occasioned by any violation of the rights and territories of others, by the British troops; but that, on the contrary, the forbearance shown by the Governor General and the Commander in Chief had been such, as to have exposed those gallant and eminent officers to the charge of having observed a policy in this respect, which was not consistent with the rules and principles of military science; assuming which, it had been asserted, that the British generals should have moved up with all their force to oppose the passage of the river at Ferozepoor. He (Sir H. Douglas) need not read to the House any of the extracts already cited, to show how resolutely the Governor General adhered to a pacific, forbearing, and defensive policy. In the last letter which he had received from his old and valued friend, previous to his quitting Calcutta for the scene of operations, he stated "our policy will be decidedly pacific; that if there should be any errors, they will be on the side of honesty and forbearance." But he (Sir H. Douglas) could show that no errors had been committed. Every arrangement was made to move from the several points of assemblage to meet any attack or movement that might be attempted. Those points were admirably chosen to cover and secure the north-west frontier of India from any attack that could be made upon it; and he (Sir H. Douglas) would show that whilst the political reasons and, as it was understood, the instructions to the Governor General, which enjoined him not to assume any offensive position or attitude that might provoke aggression, were strictly observed, he acted most judiciously, in perfect accordance with the best rules and principles of stratagetical and tactical science, in not collecting his force at Ferozepoor, where the passage of the river was menaced.

"An army attempting the passage of a river has the advantage of employing stratagems, which frequently lead the defending General to make too great a dispersion of his force. To occupy every point is to be nowhere strong; but to keep concentrated in one position upon the point most threatened by open demonstrations, will infallibly lead to attempts to turn it."

The distribution of the troops was so judicious, that all the principal points and stations on the north-west frontier were guarded, and all capable of supporting each other. Kurnal and Boorea, on the Jumna, which may be considered the base of these operations; Umbala and Surhind, next in advance, the former forty-three, the latter only twenty-four miles from Ropur, at the great bend which the Sutlej takes in that direction; Loodheana, next in advance on the line of operations, secured; Busseean and Ferozepoor garrisoned and provisioned sufficiently to resist a *coup de main*, and hold out until relieved and supported, should the enemy attempt to cross the river there and attack it with all their force. Had the bulk of the British Indian army been concentrated near Ferozepoor, certainly the passage of the river there would have been effectually prevented: it would not have been attempted—the menace would thus have succeeded, to uncover the north-west portals of India to an advance of the enemy through the Jullinder Doab, on Loodheana and Ropur. The Sikhs would, accordingly, have changed their plan of operation, by crossing the Beas river, and so turning the right of the British position by a movement

in force on Phulour and Ropur. The British army must immediately have done one of two things—either to move by the right, to prevent being turned, or to retire. To do the former, it must have crossed the Sutlej in presence of the enemy, and so violate their territory, before they had attacked ours, moving only through their own. The only other alternative, and that which more certainly must have been adopted was, to retire upon Loodheana. Thus the campaign would have opened, not by a brilliant victory on the frontier, repressing, repelling, and dreadfully punishing an act of aggression, but by the retreat of the British army from a salient point which it had improperly occupied in full force, to fall back upon points which it ought not to have quitted till the enemy's intentions should have been pronounced. Hardinge's position, no doubt, was difficult. No general, perhaps, was ever placed in a more difficult, a more responsible position; but he had intellectual resources, mental energies, military experience, fully adequate to meet and triumph over all difficulties. Trained to their profession on the fields of a protracted, righteous, and retributive war, under an illustrious Chief, who, by a singular and peculiar destiny, had decided the fate of two hemispheres — India on the plains of Assaye, and by whose sword the deliverance of Europe from an iron yoke, was ultimately effected on the plains of Waterloo—the operations of the British Indian army, were conducted by the Governor General and Commander in Chief, with ability, vigour, and energy, to victory. Having risen to offer a few military observations upon these splendid operations and brilliant victories, he (Sir H. Douglas) would confine himself principally to remarks of this character. And now, adverting to what had been so ably stated by the right hon. Baronet respecting the conduct of a gallant regiment which suffered severely in the last day's action; he (Sir Howard Douglas) would offer some observations, which he hoped might be sufficient, if not altogether to remove, at least to explain, and obliterate observations which had been made, and he regretted to say published, containing a censure on the conduct of the 62nd Regiment, which, when all the circumstances were taken into consideration, would, he trusted, efface all recollection of any wavering or faltering there might have been, under a destructive and deadly fire. The establishment of regiments in India was a thousand men, and they were generally kept well up to their strength in the field. The 62nd Regiment went into action under 700 bayonets, and they had 21 officers present. When the forces under Littler, from Ferozepoor, and those under the Governor General and Commander in Chief had formed a junction, one moving by the right, the other by the left, they formed into two lines, and the attack on the enemy's entrenched camp commenced immediately in direct echellon from the left, by the brigade to which the 62nd belonged. Supported only by the fire of a few horse-artillery guns, the brigade advanced against the enemy's position, under a tremendous fire from a very superior, well-served artillery. These light guns (6-pounders) opened their fire at 1200 yards. Hon. Members who were not conversant with artillery practice, might not be aware that, at such a distance, that nature of gun was very inefficient. As the infantry advanced, the guns limbered up, approached, and opened their fire again at 1000 yards. Again advanced to 800 yards, and then to 600 yards, and then only came within their powers of efficient and correct practice. The infantry had all this time to advance under the increasing effects of heavy well-served ordnance, which our very inferior armament, in number and nature of gun, was wholly incapable of getting down, or silencing, and consequently of sustaining by their fire the advance of the infantry. This constituted a great, and, as it appears, an unexpected difficulty, which the British and Indian troops had to face, and which might have proved disastrous against any other troops; but which they braved and conquered. It may be useful that he (Sir H. Douglas) should here recapitulate the number and calibre of artillery on both sides. The divisions of the British army had 24 9-pounders, 42 6-pounders, and 2 howitzers. The 21 guns that were with General Littler were all 6-pounders. There was not a 12-pounder in the field with the British army! The ordnance captured from the Sikh army in the actions of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd December, were—1 gun, 32-pounder; 1 gun, 24-pounder; 7 guns, 18-pounders; 1 gun, 15-pounder; 10 guns, 12-pounders: Total, 20 guns.—1 gun, 11-pounder; 4 guns, 10-pounders; 22 guns, 9-pounders; 13 guns, 8-pounders; 3 guns, 7-pounders; 10 guns, 6-pounders; 8 guns, 3-pounders; 1 gun, not stated: Total, 82 guns.—1 howitzer, 42 pounder;

1 howitzer, 24-pounder; 1 howitzer, 9-pounder; 1 howitzer, 6 and a half pounder: Total, 4 howitzers.—1 mortar, 10 cwt.; 1 mortar, 24-pounder: Total, 2 mortars.—Total, 86 guns, of which 63 are brass, taken. The enemy had altogether 150 guns. Sir John Littler said, that the brigade—

"Evinced great firmness and resolution in advancing to the attack until borne down by the furious and irresistible fire from all arms that men could be exposed to; the loss of many of their officers must have tended to relax their efforts and check their ardour, and under such circumstances only could the disappointment to Her Majesty's 62nd regiment themselves, and to their country, have been for a moment conceived."

The 62nd regiment lost seventeen officers out of twenty-one, and half its men struck down in a few minutes. So crippled, it was impossible for that regiment or that brigade to do more, with supports so far in the rear; and, under these circumstances, he must say that a little more caution ought to have been used in penning so severe a sentence upon so distinguished a regiment. He regretted that these expressions should appear in an official report, and in the public papers. He trusted, however, with his right hon. Friend, that the gallant deeds and the successes of that great day would blot out the memorial of such a misfortune, obliterate the temporary failure which was occasioned by so tremendous a crash, and restore the 62nd regiment wholly to the respect of the army, to the confidence of the Commander in Chief, and the approbation of the country. With these observations he (Sir Howard Douglas) cordially concurred in the present Vote, and expressed his admiration and deep sense of the services of the gallant army.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON said, he thought it would have been better if hon. Members had confined themselves within the wise limits marked out by the mover and seconder of this Motion, and had abstained altogether from commenting upon the policy of the Governor General. He concurred with the greatest pleasure in the vote of thanks to the Governor General, the Commander in Chief, and the gallant troops in India, and he heartily rejoiced to hear the gallant Officer who had just sat down vindicate one regiment from such harsh expressions, which must have been deeply galling to their feelings. But his object in rising was to ask the Government whether any measures had been taken to acquaint the relations of the privates and non-commissioned officers who were killed, of the loss which had befallen them? Having had ample opportunity of knowing the deep anxiety with which news from India was expected by the relatives of the officers, and being aware those feelings must exist as strongly amongst the relations of the thousands of private soldiers, he would suggest to the Government whether it would not be possible to adopt some means by which this desirable object could be effected?

VISCOUNT JOCELYN said, it was usual, after a battle, to return a list of the officers and soldiers who had fallen to the Horse Guards, so that, by inquiry there, their relations might acertain what had become of them. In the present instance, however, no such list had been returned; but he hoped they would receive it by the next mail, when information would be readily afforded to all who applied for it.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON suggested that when the list was received it should be published, to save the relations of the soldiers the necessity of writing to the Horse Guards.

SIR R. PEEL said, the noble Lord might rely upon it every means should be adopted to communicate the fate of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers to their relatives.

SIR J. HOBHOUSE said, it had never been the custom to publish the names of private soldiers who fell on these great occasions, but he knew no other reason why it should not be done; and when he was Secretary at War, he had suggested that it would be desirable. He wished to take the opportunity of saying that he gave his most cordial support to the Motion. It would be unnecessary for him to say more after the addresses of the right hon. Gentleman and his noble Friend, by whom it was moved and seconded. He doubted if the thanks of that House had ever been more worthily voted, or whether even the annals of India could furnish an instance of a more brilliant or, unhappily, a more sanguinary engagement. In honouring these brave men, therefore, they only did honour to themselves; and, considering that (as he feared) this was only the commencement of a more serious and sanguinary struggle, he thought it would be a great encouragement to these brave men to find that the Parliament of England took the earliest opportunity of thus acknowledging their distinguished services.

MR. R. MANGLES concurred most cordially in the vote of thanks proposed,

and was glad to acknowledge that, although the laurels we had gained had been purchased with much blood, they could not be said to be stained by it. Instead of being a war of aggression, the Indian Government had shown so much forbearance, that he thought those most envious of the glory of our country could not say we had sought the occasion, or that we had not borne the insolence of our enemies with the greatest patience.

Mr. WILLIAMS WYNN said, he was, like his noble relative on the other side (Lord Ebrington), most anxious that the Government should publish the names of all who had fallen in this engagement. He always thought the country had been deficient in this respect; and that not only for the satisfaction of the relatives, but as a fitting tribute for their services, the names of all who fell in battle should be recorded. He had the honour, at the time of the battle of Waterloo, when it was proposed to erect a monument to commemorate that victory, to propose that the name of every man who fell in that glorious engagement should be recorded. This proposition appeared to meet with universal approbation at the time, and he believed it was only because there was no precedent for it that it was not acceded to. But it should be remembered, that if there were no precedents for it in England, there were precedents for it in antiquity; and that the Greeks erected a pillar at Marathon, and recorded upon it the name of every man who fell in that engagement. He had only to observe, further, that he thought the attachment of the Native troops, evinced by the fact that no desertions took place, although they were fighting against those of their own faith and nation, was a circumstance which bore the most honourable testimony to the conduct of the British Government in India.

Dr. BOWRING only wished to say a few words in consequence of the right hon. Baronet having spoken severely of a party in this country, in whose opinions he might not share, but who were entitled to deference and respect. He granted that this was not a case of aggression or invasion; but the party alluded to looked with great alarm and distress at war in any shape or form; they thought that these great sacrifices could be avoided, and he was grieved to hear the right hon. Baronet give any opinion against them. He hoped the time would come when the pacific principle would be more and more taken as the groundwork of our policy; it was most intimately connected with our social, political, and commercial interests; he hoped it would be more and more adopted, and that only in cases of stern necessity would it be ventured to be departed from.

Sir R. PEEL was not aware that he had spoken harshly of the principle to which the hon. Member referred; but he certainly had never heard it carried to the extent of permitting our throats to be cut, or to prevent exertions in self-defence; and he thought this a most inappropriate occasion to bring that principle forward.

Sir E. COLEBROOKE only rose in consequence of the observation made by the hon. and gallant Member for Liverpool (Sir H. Douglas) with regard to the distinguished officer who had led the division in which the 62nd served. Having had the honour of the friendship, and he might say the intimacy of that distinguished officer, he wished to take that opportunity of making one remark. He had not understood the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) reflect on the conduct of Sir John Littler. [Sir R. Peel: Hear.] He was glad to hear that cheer from the right hon. Baronet, because the hon. and gallant Member seemed to think that it would have been the most proper course for Sir John Littler to have passed by one of the principal events of the conflict, and to have mentioned it in a private despatch; and when the gallant officer sought to vindicate the conduct of the 62nd, he thought that if he had referred to the despatch of Sir John Littler, he would have found that vindication conveyed in most strong and effectual terms.

Sir DE LACY EVANS had to propose that the names of the non-commissioned officers and privates who had fallen should be recorded in such manner as the forms of the House would permit, as he thought such a record would be extremely desirable. He had thought, on reading the Resolutions which the right hon. Baronet was about to move, it was matter of regret to find that the names of the distinguished officers who had fallen did not appear in that proceeding. He had laid the suggestion before the right hon. Baronet, and had proposed a sixth resolution, to the tenor of which the right hon. Baronet did not disagree. Since the subject had been mentioned, he would take the liberty of reading to the House the substance of the resolution he suggested; and if any individual Member would second him, he would move it as an addition, admitting that there was

no precedent, but seeing no other reason against it except the want of a precedent. The resolution would be to the effect, that the House also highly approves of the distinguished services of the late Major General Sir R. Sale, K.C.B., of the late Major General Sir John M'Caskill, K.C.B., and the other officers and men, who, in the performance of their duty, gloriously fell in these memorable actions. It was matter of regret that in the vote of thanks transmitted throughout the whole army no mention was made of the distinguished officers who fell, nor any allusion to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers who had fallen. He was aware that there would be a vote for a monument to the general officers who had fallen, but that would not extend to the subordinate officers and privates who fell upon the same occasion. If any hon. Member would second his resolution, he would submit it to the House, but if not, he would support any proposition for recording the names.

Mr. P. HOWARD seconded the Amendment.

Sir R. PEEL differed so little from the gallant Officer, that he had prepared a resolution to the same effect; but on referring to all past examples, he could find no precedent for such a resolution. The thanks of the House had always been confined to the survivors. In the vote of thanks after the battle of Trafalgar, no reference was made to Lord Nelson; and in the vote of thanks after the battle of Waterloo, Sir T. Picton was not mentioned. In giving the thanks of the House, it was highly important to adhere to precedents, not because they ought always to be strictly observed, but because it would be a source of regret to the relations of those who had formerly fallen, if a new precedent were made, and they had been passed by. As the other House had agreed to the vote as it stood, there would be a discrepancy if this resolution were added; and as there were no instances in which the names of those who had fallen had been included, he thought that the gallant Officer would not disturb the unanimity by pressing his Amendment.

Sir DE LACY EVANS withdrew his Amendment.

The Resolutions were then put *seriatim*, and carried *nem. con.*

TOTAL AND IMMEDIATE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS.

House in Committee on the Customs and Corn Importation Acts. On the Question—

"That in lieu of the Duties now payable on the importation of Corn, Grain, Meal, or Flour, there shall be paid until the 1st of February, 1849, the following Duties"—

Mr. VILLIERS rose to move an Amendment to the following effect—

"To leave out the words 'in lieu of,' in order to insert the words, 'All duties on imported corn do now cease and determine.'"

The hon. Gentleman spoke as follows: Sir, in submitting the Amendment of which I have given notice, it is not my intention to detain the House at any length, or for a moment longer than is necessary to explain the grounds on which I make this proposition. It is the farthest from my intention to impede the progress of the measure before the House, or to offer any observations in hostility to Her Majesty's Ministers. I had indeed intended to have brought forward, at a later period of the Session, a distinct Motion, with a view to carry out the object which this Amendment contemplates—namely, the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, and to that intention I would have adhered. The House has very wisely resolved to take into consideration the protective system with a view to its ultimate abolition. The Ministerial measure recognises the policy of perfect freedom in the supply of the necessaries of life to the people of this country; but it has postponed the full application of that principle until the 1st of February, 1849. In my opinion that delay is not called for. It is my conscientious belief that the full advantage of the Ministerial scheme may be extended to this country at once, without danger or inconvenience to any class of the community; and it is because I hold this opinion, and am anxious that the country should be placed with as little delay as possible in the enjoyment of the results of that policy that I now propose this Amendment. I do so in consistency with the Motion to the same effect, which it has been my practice for some time past to submit to the House. The measure which has united so large a number of the productive and industrious classes in its favour, has been for the immediate repeal of all obstructions on trade in the necessaries of life. When I made that proposition first to the House, it was not without giving it the fullest consideration. There has ever been in this country a large party who complained of their injustice and impolicy, and who have been anxious for their removal; but of late years a question has arisen whether it is possible for us

to remove them immediately, and pass to a sounder, wiser, and more rational policy, without danger or inconvenience in the event of the transition being immediate. This question I always regarded as worthy of consideration, and I have accordingly given it the most serious attention. It was urged that a panic would be created by an immediate transition, and that those who have invested their capital in the soil might be so much alarmed at the possible consequences of entire free trade, that they would withdraw their capital from agricultural employment; and that, from land being thrown out of cultivation, results might ensue which would be injurious to the community at large. I admit that this consideration had great weight with me; and had I not ascertained from the testimony of persons who, being themselves personally and deeply concerned in the welfare of the agricultural interest, ought to be best qualified to pronounce an opinion on the subject, that this apprehension was totally without foundation—that it is, in fact, altogether a mistake to suppose that you cannot pass at once, without danger or inconvenience, to a sounder policy—if I had not had the most satisfactory evidence of this fact, I would not have been the instrument for submitting the proposition to the House. But I made it my business to obtain the most authentic information that I was able on this subject, either by consulting experienced and competent persons, or those without prejudice, whose interests were deeply involved in the change; and having found upon their testimony that there was no real foundation for fear, I never hesitated to advocate the principle, and the measure of total and immediate repeal. In the year 1843, when I brought this Motion forward, I was strongly influenced to the course I adopted by the perusal of a pamphlet which had just then been published by a farmer, who distinctly announced as his opinion, that whenever the Legislature should decide on the total abolition of the Corn Laws, it would be for the interest of the farmers and the agricultural community in general, that the abolition should be immediate. I mentioned this fact when I made the Motion in the year 1843. It is not, therefore, now since the opinion of the farmers has been so generally ascertained, that I say it; nor was the case to which I referred a solitary one, for, as I mentioned at the time, that farmer, after expressing these opinions publicly and in his works, was called upon by the farmers to preside at a public meeting of his county held in the county town, to consider the subject of the Corn Laws. I was confirmed, moreover, in the wisdom and safety of seeking the immediate repeal by the opinions of some of those who united great agricultural fame with high rank and station, and never hesitated to admit the propriety of such a measure. Lord Spencer, for instance, always declared that he did not participate in the least in the fears of these who opposed the repeal of the Corn Law, alleging as his reason that the effect of their immediate repeal would be to equalize the price here and on the Continent; and that a rise in the price of grain abroad, and some fall in the price in this country, which might be expected at first to occur, would at the same time prevent that inundation of foreign corn of which some spoke with such dread. He was not single in his opinion among those of rank and property who had devoted much consideration to the interests of agriculture, and to the circumstances under which farming in this country might be improved and profitably conducted. I may here allude particularly to two noblemen, who, residing much of the year on their estates, doing much to improve their property, are practically acquainted with the business of farming. I refer to Lord Ducie and Lord Radnor; they have always said—and since this measure has been proposed have taken occasion particularly to declare—that the interest of the farmer and the landlord alike required that the change should be effected at once: they say, moreover, that among their own tenants and among those in their neighbourhoods this opinion is universal. Their reasoning was this, that if the time for the abolition were to be postponed with a view to afford to persons whose capital was vested in the soil an opportunity of preparing for the transition, the postponement would fail of its object; because they might rest assured that preparation would never be made by the farmer until the duty had been actually abolished. There would still be a delusive hope on the part of the landlords, that they might be able to retain protection or revert to the old law; and the farmers, with prospects so uncertain before them, would never think of making preparations involving great trouble and expense. They argued, however, that exactly the reverse would be the case with the foreign grower, for that he would watch with an anxious eye the period for the opening of the markets, and possibly

proceed at once to make preparations on an extensive scale, applying capital in various ways to be ready for an open trade at the end of the third year, rendering it perhaps difficult at first to the native grower to compete with the foreign supply. This was the view I entertained in defending my proposition in 1843, constantly urging out of this House that what might be deemed precipitate in other things would be only prudent with respect to corn, owing to the unprepared state of the Continent, and the tardy processes of agriculture. And now I ask the House to consider the state of opinion generally on the subject, now that the question has to be seriously decided upon; and I ask if there is any one thing on which unanimity has been more nearly approached than this; but if the Corn Laws are to be repealed, it should be done at once. I think that of this fact we have had ample indication in the progress of the debate. Hon. Members who are hostile to the principle of free trade, have, without any promptings from this side of the House, volunteered the statement, that if we are to have it, it were better to have it immediately; and this they have given not as their own opinion only, but as the feeling and opinion of the farmers all over the country. It will not be denied that certain personages who boast to be the farmers' friends, and who profess to have the agricultural interests especially at heart, immediately after the meeting of Parliament declared voluntarily to the world that it would be for the interest of the farmers that the Corn Laws, if repealed at all, should be repealed immediately. I allude especially to the noble Duke in the other House, who, the week after the opening of Parliament, volunteered the declaration of his own opinion, and answered for the opinions of the farmers generally (with which he is said to be conversant), that if we were to have repeal at all, that it should not be delayed. Every body must remember the distinct, emphatic, and unequivocal manner in which the hon. Member for Somersetshire, who is regarded by his Friends as an oracle on farmers' interests, made a declaration to the same effect. [A VOICE: No!] I beg your pardon. The hon. Member volunteered the assertion that the farmers, if they were put to their election, would prefer immediate to protracted repeal; nay, he pledged his honour to the fact; and, turning round to the Friends behind him, he asked them if it were not true, and they answered by a unanimous cheer. There is no county in England which has been more forward in declaring in favour of protection, than the county of Lincoln; and yet my noble Friend the Member for Lincoln (Lord Worsley) was, I believe, the very first to see the advantage of immediate repeal. Three months since, he made the declaration in favour of immediate repeal (if repeal at all) so decisively, so unequivocally, that I had expected he would have originated some measure in favour of it. So that from every quarter—from every authority—from which you could expect to learn what is the opinion, the interest, and the wish of the farmer, you learn it is for the immediate repeal. Sir, I do not exactly perceive upon what ground then it is that any party in this House should object to the Amendment which I now propose. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, who represent the protection interest, are quite angry if any one distinguishes their interest as landlords from that of the farmers. I am sure they would be angry if I said they had, and I do not wish, on this occasion, to provoke their anger by saying they have, an interest distinct from the farmer; though I know it is said that the landlords have interests in this matter opposed to that of the farmer. I know it is said, that the farmer wants an adjustment of rent to prices; that the farmer wants an arrangement with the landlord; that the farmers want to come to some terms with the landlords on the subject as soon as possible; but that the landlords are unwilling to vary in any respect their present arrangements with their tenants, which is for the advantage of the landlords; that they do not despair yet of being able to retain protection, to keep up some part of the sliding-scale; that they are not willing to come to terms with the farmers, but hope to keep up the prices by retaining the protection, and to hold out still by these means the prospect to the farmer of high prices. But if hon. Gentlemen do really wish to do justly by that interest about which they appear to be so solicitous, and of which they talk so much in this House, I offer them now an opportunity by supporting this Amendment; and I cannot myself see how they can avoid it. There has been so much consideration of the general interests in the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Ministers, that I should be willing to rest my proposition on these grounds alone, namely, that the delay proposed, simply for the benefit of the agriculturist, is not really for his advan-

tage, and that his interest is even greater than that of the public for an immediate settlement. I cannot, however, omit to remark upon the opinions of the Government, and the position in which they stand with regard to the Amendment. I do not do so in any spirit of hostility, or in any hostility to the measure that is proposed, or in forgetfulness of the difficulties the Government had to encounter in the matter. But I must call the attention of the House to the fact, that the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government cannot entertain much fear himself respecting the instant suspension or abolition of the Corn Law. If I correctly understand his statement to this House on the 1st of November last, he considered that there was a very great apprehension of a want of food in England, and he conceived it would be safe and wise instantly to suspend the law, or for the time practically to abolish it. I do not collect from the right hon. Gentleman, that his apprehension is less now than it was then. He apprehended a deficiency of food on the 1st of November, in some parts of the United Kingdom, and deemed a suspension to be necessary. From what has fallen from him since the Session commenced, it appears that his apprehensions have not abated. His fears are nearly as great—quite as great—as they were on the 1st of November. The right hon. Baronet then has no fear himself of the consequences to the country from the immediate suspension of the law, for he proposed that suspension as a mode of extending relief to the people; but the right hon. Gentleman has stated with great force his reasons for permanently abolishing the law, and seems to have satisfied himself that at a certain time the trade in corn should be free, and restriction be permanently abolished. He seems then to have reasons why the law should be immediately suspended, and to have reasons also why it should be permanently abolished. Now that is precisely the effect of my Amendment; I propose that the abolition should be immediate as well as permanent. The right hon. Gentleman, if he supports the immediate abolition of the law, has only to look round the House, and he will see what he could not expect to see on other questions, friends on all sides of the House. If he looks to that bench [pointing to the protectionists] from which he has received a fierce opposition on the principle of free trade, and on which he has been successful, he will find that, on the question of immediate suspension of the law, they are ready to support him. For this they say they are prepared; they say it was the thing to have done; they urge it now as the measure that ought to be adopted. We have it then, on the best authority, that suspension of the law, or immediate repeal, will be attended with no evil, whatever may be apprehended from permanent repeal. Well, then, if the right hon. Gentleman will look opposite to him (to the Opposition benches) he will find the party, at the head of which is my noble Friend the Member for London, is perfectly ready, on the general principle, to support the immediate as well as total abolition of the Corn Law. My noble Friend has expressed this view of the question, and honestly entertains the opinions; and we know that when he expresses an opinion we may rely upon him. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) will adopt the Amendment I propose, which is for the immediate, total, and permanent repeal, he will find authorities on that side of the House [pointing to the protectionists] to assure him that it will be safe, and he will find the requisite support and strength on this side of the House to carry him through with it. The right hon. Gentleman has said himself, that he has no fears of his own on the subject. The hon. Member for Somersetshire has elicited his opinion on the matter. The right hon. Gentleman stated, in answer to a question from the Member for Somersetshire, on the point of postponement, that he had been apprehensive of producing panic and alarm among the farmers by abolishing the law at once, and he was desirous to give them time to prepare for the change; but the right hon. Gentleman had not then heard the consolatory speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, for he told him there was no ground for fear or alarm —that if there was to be free trade, the farmers were ready for it, or that they did not want delay. The agricultural interest do not require the postponement. Then, if the right hon. Gentleman himself is in favour of the immediate and permanent abolition of the law, I cannot understand why he should not adopt the Amendment. Every person seems to be ready for it: there is no danger to be apprehended from it; and there is a majority in the House in favour of it. If, then, Sir, there are no objections to or inconvenience attending the adoption of the Amendment, are there not some advantages that would

result from it? There is always one that I should name before any other—that there would then be no impediment to the supply of food for the people; and let me say that this is a most important consideration this year, and perhaps more so than any other for many years past. There are several reasons why a deficient supply may be expected this year. The harvest has been bad in Europe, bad in the grain-growing countries, and also deficient in other States not usually dependent on foreign supply; our own harvest has been deficient; there has been a failure in an important article of subsistence in Ireland, and there is an unusually great consumption of wheat in this country; there is little to come from America this year, and we must expect less than usual from the Baltic. The prices are high in neighbouring countries, the ports are open for imports, but shut for export. Already wheat, destined for this country, has not waited for the passing of this measure, but has proceeded to Antwerp, and found a market. There was a profit to be obtained from the price, and there was no duty. We are then in a state possibly to want food this year, and yet to be in danger of not obtaining it. We have no indication of the harvest yet for the coming year, and before nine months are over we may be suffering from a deficiency—paying a high price, and the bnsiness of the country disturbed by it. Every sixpence of duty may tell upon the supply and the price this year. The hon. Gentleman, in continuation, asked if that was just towards the people, or if it was wise, after the admission that had been made of the error, the mischief and the inhumanity of the law, and whether it was politic to let the people see this remnant of it in operation and possibly as effective in causing their suffering as before it was amended? This duty of 4*s.* might be as effective in excluding food a short time hence as the present duty of 17*s.* If food were to rise much on the Continent, if prices became at all equalized, this 4*s.* added to all the other charges of importation might prevent a grain coming in: on this account, therefore the duty is most objectionable. It would not, perhaps, be fair to suppose that the Government had retained this duty from choice, and not to notice the supposed reasons of its retention. It was said that they had contrived their scheme with a view to its success, that they had secured a certain amount of support for the measure as it was, but if they were to alter it in this particular, they might risk the loss of the measure in another place: this consideration, he understood, would weigh with some of his own friends, who felt anxious that the measure before the House should be secured. There might be prudence, no doubt, in this course, and he did not impugn their judgment; at the same time he felt it his duty to state the reasons distinctly to the House, that he thought ought to weigh with it, and decide it to adopt the Amendment. He was sure they were such that justified its being proposed. Before he sat down he could not help submitting one other consideration to the House bearing upon the subject. He referred to the statement made by his hon. Friend the Member for Stockport, during the last debate. He stated that that great organization of the people of which he was a leader, was formed and existed for the single and simple purpose of obtaining the removal of all obstructions to the trade in the necessaries of life; and he answered for the good faith of those who followed him, that the day after this law was repealed that that association would dissolve. Now it was not underrating the services which he (Mr. Villiers) considered the League had rendered to the country, to say, that that would be a great advantage. He believed that the time would soon arrive when the services of the League would be fully and duly appreciated by the whole country; for his part he should always look back with satisfaction at having co-operated with it, and joined in their exertions as far as he was able. They had sought to disseminate the views and opinions of those clear and calm minds that had enlightened this country on the difficult science of political economy. They had sought support only by appealing to the reason of those whom they addressed; and he honestly believed that they had, during the long period of their agitation, given as little real cause of offence to those opposed to them as any body of men that ever were united for a great public object. But, doubtless, it was an evil that such a combination should exist. It was impossible for them to proceed without exciting bad feeling and great animosity between classes. He, for one, deeply regretting that result, was anxious that no reason should remain to warrant a continuance of the cause. That could, as his hon. Friend the Member for Stockport said, be only effected in one way; for he know that both

he and his hon. Friend the Member for Durham were deeply bound to those who trusted them that they would not cease their exertions until the object for which they were associated was attained. He did not say that this ought to be binding on the Legislature, if any evil was likely to follow from it; but his case was, that there was no evil likely to ensue; nothing indeed, but advantage to the interest in question—added to which would be the blessing that those classes who had been brought into collision would, after the repeal of this law, cease to struggle with each other, and only see their real interest in co-operating to promote the interest and happiness of the public at large. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving his Amendment as above.

COLONEL SIBTHORP said, he would not long occupy the attention of the House. The opinions he entertained on the subject were very well known, as were the opinions he entertained upon the conduct of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, who insulted the country by bringing forward these measures in a deceitful manner. The course pursued by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was, he had no hesitation in saying, a comparatively bold, manly, and independent one: he had proved himself a much more honest man than any one on the Treasury benches. He wished he could speak as well of those in whom he had formerly placed confidence. He would read to the House a speech made at a banqnet at which Sir Robert Peel was present in 1838. On that occasion the right hon. Baronet treated with extreme ridicule the Government of the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell), which was then in power. At that meeting there were present, among others, the following gentlemen: the Marquess of Chandos, now the Duke of Buckingham, well known by the appellation of "the Farmer's Friend," and a more honourable title he could not bear; and what was more, the noble Duke deserved it. The Marquess of Chandos was in the chair, and among those present were Sir R. Peel, Lord Francis Egerton, Mr. Goulburn, Lord Lowther, Sir R. Inglis, Lord Stanley, Sir J. Graham, Mr. Herries, and Lord Granville Somerset. He could not say whether the noble Lord yet continued a Member of the Government. He had not seen him in the House lately. He could not say where he was, but felt sure that that noble Lord would not be found, where it was said another noble Lord had been found, in the coalhole. But what were the words of the right hon. Baronet on that occasion? He said—

"I am deeply grateful for the motives which have influenced you in paying me this mark of respect, unparalleled in the political annals of this country, and for the corresponding feeling with which you, Gentlemen, have just received the proposition of my noble Friend. Gentlemen, I wish I had any command of language, at least of appropriate and befitting language, to convey to you the sensations which, as you must perceive, almost overpower me; but I feel that it is infinitely better to appeal to your feeling for an estimate and vindication of mine—to the consciousness of each of you that, were you placed in my present situation, you would rather remain perfectly silent than try to express your gratitude by the trite and exhausted forms of complimentary acknowledgment. Gentlemen, you have conferred upon me the highest reward that can be conferred upon a public man who does aspire to that distinction, and that alone, which is founded upon the esteem and confidence of intelligent and enlightened men, who is ambitious of power, but of that power only which, having its roots in much esteem and confidence, adds life and vigour to the authority derived from office, and does not wither and decay when official authority is extinct. Gentlemen, you have also proved to me and others that there are other bonds of connexion—other sympathies which unite us besides a cold concurrence in political sentiments. You have proved to those who are treading the rugged and laborious path which leads to political eminence, that they may on their way be cheered by the cordial voice of friendship, and the cheering tones of personal attachment and esteem. By this feeling, Gentlemen, you have done much more than even the honour it confers upon me; you have given a public demonstration that the great object to which, for some years past, my exertions have been mainly directed, is completely accomplished. My object for some years past—that which I have most earnestly laboured to accomplish—has been to lay the foundation of a great party—which, existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will, should diminish the risk and deaden the shock of a collision between the two deliberative branches of the Legislature—which should enable us to check the too importunate eagerness of well-intending men, for hasty and precipitate changes in the Constitution and laws of the country, and by which we should be enabled to say, with a voice of authority, to the restless spirit of revolutionary change, 'Here are thy bounds, and here shall thy vibrations cease.'"

This was what the right hon. Baronet said after dinner, and *cum vino veritas*. Such were the opinions, then, of the right hon. Baronet, or rather the professed opinions; for he (Colonel Sibthorp) was sorry to say, that he thought the right hon. Baronet entertained the same opinions then as now, but he wanted the moral courage to avow them; moral courage—that quality which was a great virtue in any man, but above all requisite in a Prime Minister. The

right hon. Baronet's system of politics seemed to be founded upon expediency. Yes; that one word would explain his whole conduct. The right hon. Baronet deprecated the conduct of the noble Lord opposite, who was then in power; but *tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis.* He had no doubt the right hon. Baronet could turn round upon him as he did the other night, and say—[*A call of* "Question"]—If the hon. Member who called "Question" was tired of him, he could walk out. But he would tell the right hon. Gentleman that the man who was white to-day and black to-morrow would not appear to advantage, either to that House or to the country. He should not be at all surprised if the right hon. Baronet, before the expiration of three years, proposed the immediate and total repeal of the Corn Laws. Three years was a favourite period with the right hon. Baronet. Three was a pet number of his. There were three years of triumph—three years of postponement—three reasons—three tests, just as there are three Secretaries of State. As for the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, he had filled—he could not tell how many situations. He had assumed all the shapes of Proteus—he had at least undergone three times three chops and changes—in short, the right hon. Baronet was ready for any place—Tory, Whig, or Radical—"any port in a storm." Something had been said in the former discussion about the Church. It was only last year that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had given him very strong reason to think he had no very strong attachment to the Church, by his conduct on the Maynooth and other questions. By their acts you will know them. His conviction was, that the right hon. Baronet felt as much for the Church as he did for the farmers—that was, he cared as little for one as the other—that he was as little disposed to maintain the rights of the Church as he was those of the farmers. He had heard the League was to be dissolved; but, if so, what was to become of the votes they were to manufacture, and of their project for undermining "the proud aristocracy," as the right hon. Baronet termed them. The hon. and gallant Officer read another extract from the speech of Sir R. Peel above quoted, showing the necessity for union and exertion in the Conservative party, and proceeded to say—but the right hon. Gentleman having now betrayed that party, he attempted to support himself by those Members of it who still adhered to him, and by the party opposite. But *inter duas sellas inerduas.* In other words, between two stools the breech will fall to the ground. He was sorry to see the Treasury benches so much infested with those noxious animals called rats. The gallant Officer proceeded to read another extract from the speech of Sir R. Peel:—

"My object is, that by steadily attending to our duty, by censuring the Government on all occasions when they deserve it, enforcing our principles by aiding them to carry those measures which we think right, even though by so doing we may be rescuing the Government, we may establish new claims upon the approbation of the country. I own I have felt on some occasions, when we might have relied upon a majority in favour of those principles which the Government professed to share in common with us, yet I have found that when a question involved the existence of the Government, the principles were forgotten, and the only consideration was, how most effectually the Government might be preserved. It cannot be satisfactory to be told—'You deserve censure, but rather than inflict it upon you, we will vote in your favour to rescue you.' Gentlemen, there was an observation made more than a hundred years ago by Mr. Addison, who lamented the violent party heats and resentments which appeared to obstruct the performance of public duty, and suggested that it was a bounden duty to combine all neutral men in defence of the common good. He thought it possible to form some sort of covenant to which moderate men might adhere, and by which, rising above party considerations, and only seeking for the public good, they might be bound. He found great difficulty in framing such an instrument, but at length he hit upon a form of covenant for moderate men. I will read the form of association which Mr. Addison proposed, and which he expected to be subscribed by moderate men, but which, I believe, would find but little favour in these days. It was to this effect:—'We whose names are hereunto subscribed, do solemnly declare that we do conscientiously believe that two and two make four, and that we shall adjudge any man to be an enemy who advances or pretends to the contrary. We are likewise ready to maintain at any hazard, against all men, that six is less than seven in all times and places. We do finally declare our firm determination to call black black, and white white, and that we shall, on all occasions, oppose such persons as shall, on any day of the year, hold black to be white, or white black, to the utmost period of our lives.' If Mr. Addison were now alive, he would perceive that this form of association was not much appreciated by the friends of the Government; but if he had drawn it in a different form—if he had said, 'We will on all occasions, on every day of the year, vote black to be white, or white black, whenever the Government is implicated,' that would insure more signatures than the declaration which he proposed, that two and two make four, and that on every day of the year, black shall be considered black, and white white."

He thought that what the right hon. Baronet said of making black white, and white

black, was thoroughly illustrated by some of his supporters, who spoke one way, and voted precisely the reverse. They spoke white, and voted black. He really could not see what the grounds were upon which the right hon. Baronet could at all justify or excuse himself from bringing forward the present question; and as for the information conveyed in his speech, he thought it was completely refuted in the admirable one delivered by the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) on Friday night. The gallant Officer read one of the notes of invitation which Sir R. Peel was accustomed to send to his supporters previously to the commencement of the Session, requesting them to meet him at his house, to concert the line of action to be adopted and pursued during the Session; but neither himself, nor any of those about him had received a similar note this Session. At any rate he had not been honoured with any invitation to the right hon. Baronet's house; but had he attended the League meetings at Covent Garden, this might have been the case. He should oppose the right hon. Baronet whenever it was possible. On this occasion, however, he regretted he could not do so. If, on the division, he went into the same lobby with the right hon. Baronet to oppose the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, it was from no attachment, no affection, no regard for the right hon. Baronet, or for any one Member on the Treasury benches. It was solely because he was obliged to choose the least of two evils. The right hon. Baronet had been surrounded by a great and powerful party—such a party as no other Minister ever had. He might have retained that party firm to himself and beneficially for the country. That party had ever shown loyalty to their Sovereign, and reverence for the Protestant Church. They had always endeavoured to uphold and maintain the Church. That party would have gone through fire and water for him. He had, however, deceived and betrayed that party; and let him now beware lest he was sowing the seeds of a revolution. He hoped he should never see the day when he should find his country ruined by those who had betrayed it, but who ought to have preserved it. The gallant Colonel concluded by cautioning the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government to beware of his free-trade associates, and to guard against the dangers likely to arise from the dissemination and encouragement of their doctrines.

Lord WORSLEY said, as the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had alluded to him, and to a statement which he had made on this question on another occasion, at a time when it was thought impossible the question could be met as a mere matter of compromise, and when he supposed that the House of Commons were to decide by a large majority that no alteration of the Corn Law should take place, or else that there should be a settlement of the question either by a total abolition, or by such an arrangement as those who advocated total abolition would assent to, he wished to state to the House the grounds on which he intended to give his vote on the present Amendment. It was now proposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, that all duties on the importation of foreign corn should totally and immediately cease. On the other hand, it was proposed by Her Majesty's Government that, until 1849, there should be a continuance of the sliding-scale, on a much lower rate of duty than that now in operation. His impression was, that if the question were solely whether the Motion proposed now by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, or that of Her Majesty's Government, should be agreed to, it would be much better that they should now decide in favour of immediate and total repeal, than that they should be forced to remain in a state of constant uncertainty during a period of three years from the present time. On those grounds, if the House had to decide simply between those two propositions, he certainly should be in favour of the proposition of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. But he had to look to the question in this light: he felt that if he were to vote in favour of the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton; and if that Motion were carried by the House, he would thus aid in precluding himself from considering other Amendments which were to be proposed by other hon. Members on this question. It might be considered that, in adopting this course, he was not acting quite consistently with the opinion which he had before expressed in favour of a desire to set this question at rest; but he hoped he could satisfactorily explain to the House that the charge of inconsistency could not be brought against him, and that he was justified in taking the course which he adopted, because he believed that the propositions to be brought forward by the hon. Member for Anglesea (Mr. W. O. Stanley)

would be a settlement of the question, and because he was anxious to give that proposition his support. The Amendment intended to be proposed by the hon. Member for Anglesea was, that in lieu of the duties now paid on the importation of foreign corn and grain, there should be paid a fixed duty of *5s.* a quarter on wheat, *2s.* 6*d.* a quarter on barley, and *2s.* on oats. Now, it might be said, those who had hitherto advocated a total repeal of the Corn Laws, would not be satisfied with that arrangement—that it would not come up with their expectations or desires; but, on the other hand, the persons who had hitherto supported them could not but feel that such a plan would not materially enhance the price of food; and although it would not afford any real protection to the agriculturists of this country, it would, to a certain extent, supply that loss to the revenue which a total repeal would effect, and which must otherwise be made up by the imposition of some other burden. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton must know better than he (Lord Worsley) did, the opinions of the persons to whom he alluded; but it was not improbable that, though they had asked so much, they would take less than they demanded. He remembered that, before the Reform Bill had been proposed, they were told that nothing short of vote by ballot, a considerable extension of the franchise, and the repeal of the Septennial Act, would at all satisfy the country; and yet, when a measure much shorter than these demands was proposed, it was admitted to be a greater step than was thought possible to obtain. He did not consider that the Amendment about to be proposed by the hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. R. M. Milnes), would prove a settlement of the question. That was, that the sliding-scale, which, as proposed by Her Majesty's Government in the present instance, was to cease altogether in 1849, should continue after that period; that it was to be a permanent sliding-scale varying from 10*s.* to 4*s.* a quarter on wheat. That proposition would not, he was convinced, be considered satisfactory by those who advocated an alteration in the laws; whereas, by adopting a fixed duty of *5s.* a quarter upon wheat, as proposed by the hon. Member for Anglesea, he considered the corn merchant would be satisfied, as he would then have a regularity in the trade he would have to prosecute, while many who now opposed any alteration in the existing law would also give such an arrangement their support. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Captain Polhill) had also given notice of an Amendment which he thought he could show it would be utterly impossible to carry. The Amendment was to the effect—

"That, in the event of this House consenting to the change proposed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government in the duties on the importation of foreign corn for three years, that the amount of such duties as received shall be appropriated as a fund to relieve or compensate such tenant-farmers of the United Kingdom now subjected to certain rents, burdens, covenants, and obligations entered into under the present scale of duties, who may prove before a Select Committee of this House, that they have been ruined, impoverished, or deeply injured by the lessening of the protection they now possess."

He thought the House would agree with him that it would be utterly impossible to have a Committee to decide who had been ruined by the reduction of protective duties, or who had not, and to hear the complaints of farmers, and ascertain whether the ruin of which they would complain might be owing, perhaps, to the effect of a change in the Corn Laws, or perhaps to incautious or improper arrangements entered into by particular individuals. If the majority of the House should support the views of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, he should thereby be precluded from supporting any other proposition advocating a higher amount of duty; and he could not, therefore, give any assistance towards bringing about such a result. On the other hand, he thought there might be very serious evils arise from the course proposed by Her Majesty's Government. How, for instance, could they avoid the difficulty which would arise when the anticipations which had been expressed, and which he understood it was generally believed out of doors would be carried into effect, namely, that an endeavour would be made on the part of the farmers and those by whom they were advised, to get back at the next general election the protection of which they were now to be deprived, by returning to Parliament none but Members pledged to support a Corn Law, and to get rid of the measure which Her Majesty's Government were now prepared to carry: and how, he would ask, while such a course of proceeding were threatened, could those who were the advocates of the Anti-Corn-Law League be expected to persuade the Members of that association to dissolve their body. They could not expect that such a course would

be taken; and in stating that he would support the Motion of his hon. Member for Wolverhampton, if the question were simply between it and the propositions of the Government; he did so, because he was not one of those who would delude the farmers—he could not call it by any milder term—with the idea that they could get back again the protection which it was now proposed to be taken from them. If he were to hold forth that language to the farmers, he felt that he should be taking a dishonest part; because he did not think the agriculturists had the least chance of recovering the protection of a Corn Law if it were once taken from them. He could not, therefore, give any vote that would hold out the least expectation of such an event taking place. If he had silently opposed the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, in order to support the measure of the Government, it might lead to an expectation out of doors, that he thought there was a chance of the agriculturists again getting the protection of which they were now to be deprived. He did not think there was the least probability of such an event taking place; and believing such to be the case, he could not do otherwise, acting as an honest man, than show by his vote the view which he entertained of the question. In voting against the Amendmeet of his hon. Friend, he wished also to show that he believed it was impossible the agriculturists could ever again possess such an amount of duty as they at present enjoyed.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON was one of those who never entertained any sanguine expectations that those hon. Members who advocated protection would support the Motion of his hon. Friend. He felt that when the proposition of immediate repeal was submitted to the House, those hon. Members would find very good reasons for not giving it their support; but, at the same time, he was extremely glad to hear from the noble Lord who had just sat down, that he did not withhold his vote from his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers), because he would wish to encourage the feeling among the tenant-farmers that the protection which was now about being withdrawn from them could ever again be restored. His noble Friend had told them that, if he were to take such a part, he should not be acting honestly—conscientiously believing, as his noble Friend did, that protection once withdrawn could never be again conferred upon them; but such being the conviction of his noble Friend, he would necessarily be perfectly justified in giving his vote in favour of the Motion of his hon. Friend. He thought his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton had taken a judicious course in submitting this measure to the House. He thought it was due to the country, to those who had acted cordially with him in this free-trade movement, and due to the hon. Member himself, to submit this proposal to the House. It was a proposal, as his hon. Friend had very justly observed, which had been taken and adopted as the motto of the free-trade movement after due consideration. It had caused some unpopularity to the advocates of free trade. It had been said that the question of immediate repeal of the Corn Laws was a proposition which overlooked the sufferings that might arise to the agricultural body from the immediate transition from monopoly to complete freedom of trade. All these things were taken into consideration, and formed the elements on which the Gentlemen who had conducted the free-trade movement had come to the decision that it was better for the agricultural interests, and for all the interests of the country, that this question should be settled by the mode of immediate and unconditional repeal. He thought that his hon. Friend himself, having taken so prominent a part in the promotion of the repeal of the Corn Law, was entitled to be heard in respect to the settlement about to be made. His hon. Friend must take a very large share of the responsibility on his shoulders; and on the shoulders of his friends must also rest much of the responsibility of the future consequences of this measure. Therefore, he would say his hon. Friend was entitled to have a voice in the settlement of the question. With regard to the allegation that they would endanger the plan of the Government by asking for something more than was proposed by the right hon. Baronet, all he could say was that he did not think that danger would exist if they succeeded in inducing the House of Commons to carry his hon. Friend's propositions. As to what would take place elsewhere, with that, he submitted, they had nothing to do. All he could say was, that there was not a single supporter of the right hon. Baronet on his own side of the House, who had spoken during the late debate, who had stated that he gave his support to the measure in consequence of the three years' grace that was afforded to the agricultural

interests, while many opponents of the measure had expressly declared that they would prefer immediate to gradual repeal. Under these circumstances, he could not perceive that any danger could possibly arise from pressing upon the Committee the Motion of his hon. Friend. But when he took into consideration the present condition of the country, he felt that the case of his hon. Friend was perfectly irresistible. It was the only case that met the circumstances which had been stated by the First Minister of the Crown. The First Minister had told them that he had two objects in view: one to settle permanently the question how the future commercial policy of the country should be conducted; and the other was how, at the present moment, they were to avert a great national calamity. Now, his hon. Friend had reminded the House that, in November, the right hon. Baronet had thought that no measure short of opening the ports and a complete freedom of the corn trade, would satisfy the present emergency; and he had also contended that nothing short of total repeal would be a final adjustment of the Corn Law question. Under these circumstances, it appeared to him that there was no course which the House of Commons could, in common reason and with consistency, adopt at the present moment but total and immediate repeal. Nothing short of such an adjustment could meet the present exigency in Ireland; and he would beg to remind the right hon. Baronet that, though he might grant these three years' grace to the agriculturists, it was a question whether, considering the accounts which were received from that country, he could maintain this degree of protection even until the month of July next. How could he, when he knew that famine and fever were making progress in Ireland in consequence of the want of food—how could he possibly maintain any duty on the importation of foreign corn? He would ask, if it were right to open the ports in November last, how could a maintenance of the duty be defended at the present moment, especially when he considered that the circumstances which justified the opening of the ports in November had become more and more pressing at the present moment? His noble Friend had touched on the duty on wheat; but they should also look to the effect of the duty on barley and oats. Taking the present prices of barley and oats, the scale of the right hon. Baronet would amount to an actual prohibition. No barley or oats could be now introduced into the country and sold at the present prices if they had to pay 2*s.* 6*d.* duty. How, then, could they for a moment suppose it was possible to maintain a duty to the proposed extent under the emergency at present existing in Ireland? The duty of 2*s.* upon oats and barley was, after all, 10 per cent upon the value. He believed that, taking the price of barley in this country at the present moment, it could not be imported and pay duty at a profit. Those duties would cause considerable supplies of oats and barley to be thrown into the English market, and to be diverted from foreign markets; and this when we were told that every grain of corn that could be imported into this country was necessary to avert the calamity with which we were threatened. That immediate, instead of deferred, repeal was better for the agricultural interest, there could be no doubt. He himself did not believe the farmers cared anything about the Corn Law question. He declared positively it had struck him as something most remarkable, when he was in the country, to find that, as a matter of business, the tenant-farmers did not seem to care one straw about the repeal of the Corn Laws. As a matter of politics, they might have some concern upon it; as a matter of opinion, they had not; but if Gentlemen opposite were right in saying that the farmer was entitled to a reduction of rent in consequence of the withdrawal of protection, when the farmer came to ask them for an adjustment, what would be their answer? Would they not say, "Wait and see what the effect of free trade will be?" His hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden) had informed the country that prices would not be affected by the repeal of the Corn Laws; and, therefore, they (the protectionists) said to their tenants, "Wait till the 1st of February, 1849, and see whether it will then be necessary to make a re-arrangement of rent, or to lay out capital in particular improvements." He (Mr. Gibson) believed that the change impending over the agricultural body till 1849 would cause many improvements to be postponed till that period, which, if the repeal took place now, would be carried into effect before. If a man was ordered to be executed this day three years, did the House suppose he would occupy the interval in preparing for eternity? Nothing of the kind. He would be calculating how he could avert the sentence. The position of the protectionists

was exactly the same. Protection had been fairly put upon its trial; it had been found guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, and condemnation had been passed upon it by that House. All that was asked for now was its speedy and immediate execution, and no respite. A respite, instead of being a kindness, would be a cruelty; and he called upon the House to adopt, as the best measure for the agricultural interest, as the most in accordance with the justice of the case, and the most equal to meet the pressing emergencies of Ireland, the Amendment proposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton.

Mr. B. ESCOTT said, if no danger could be proved to arise from the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, he would vote for it; but if anything occurred in the course of the debate to make him seriously believe that the eventual success of the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Ministers would be endangered by the Amendment, however much he might respect the hon. Member (Mr. Villiers) for his advocacy of this cause—and no one could honour him more for it than he did—then, upon the principle laid down by the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) at the commencement of the Session, in order to save that great measure, he should vote against the Amendment. The question he asked himself, in determining the principle upon which he should give his vote was this :—Under the existing circumstances of the country, is it right and just that the price of the food of the people should be increased by restrictive laws? He had attended a meeting of his constituents in November last, and he told them that, in his opinion, the only justification of the ports being closed was the fact then supposed to exist, that there was no Government responsible for the affairs of the country. The statements made by the First Lord of the Treasury during the late debates fully supported him, when he said, "at that time there was no Government responsible for the affairs of the country;" and it was notorious that his right hon. Friend could not open them, in consequence of certain disagreements. Had anything happened since to make him (Mr. B. Escott) believe that there ought to be no restrictions on the importation of food? He thought everything had happened to make the unrestricted importation of food more necessary than it was before; and, under these circumstances, he should vote for the Amendment, unless he found that by so doing he should endanger the great measure of Her Majesty's Ministers. One word with regard to the farmers : they said they wanted to have done with agitation, and that there was but one way to accomplish that, which was, to repeal the Corn Law for ever. There was but one Member on the benches near him who would tell the farmers differently; but it was mere delusion to tell them anything else. This being the case, he asked whether it would not be better for the interests of the farmers, for the interests of trade and commerce, and for the credit of the House of Commons to repeal the Corn Laws at once.

Mr. R. COLBORNE, not having had any previous opportunity of expressing his opinion on this subject, wished to state the grounds on which he should give a cordial and sincere support to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. He had given his support to the right hon. Baronet, not because he believed that all the details of his proposed measure were perfect, but because the measure itself was right in principle. The arguments and reasoning of the right hon. Baronet had clearly proved free trade to be right in principle; but, notwithstanding this approbation, he (Mr. R. Colborne) reserved to himself the right of voting against whatever parts of the measure he might think proper. That measure was a free-trade measure; but it would have told better upon the country if it had included the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) had told the House it was not his wish that the Amendment should be carried, for fear it should endanger the Ministerial measure; and on this point he would allude to one subject upon which he feared there would not be found many to agree with him. He referred to a dissolution of Parliament upon this question. He believed if Parliament were dissolved, the cause of free trade would gain; but when he heard the noble Lord say they dared not oppose the measure, because he thought if there was a dissolution upon it, there was not sufficient spirit to carry him through, he (Mr. R. Colborne) would ask what stronger proof there was of it than the arguments urged by hon. Gentlemen opposite in favour of an appeal to the country? Before this measure was finally settled, there must be a new Parliament, for it was impossible to call the doubt and hesitation of three years

a settlement. There must, in short, be a total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, otherwise the question would be agitated again and again. The only chance of carrying the Ministerial measure to the satisfaction of the country, was to make the repeal total and immediate. Hon. Gentlemen must get ready to fight the battle; and as the battle must be fought, he urged upon the House to adopt the principles of total and immediate repeal that evening. He did not urge this with any object of party triumph over the right hon. Baronet, but because he wished him to have the satisfaction of carrying a great and important measure. Before he sat down, he wished to refer to one point upon which he was personally concerned. In one of the newspapers of yesterday he had been mentioned as a political apostate. He was not an apostate, and the editor had apologized to him for the expression, and there the matter ended. He mentioned this circumstance because it had always been his opinion, notwithstanding the eloquent speech of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, that protection affected the landlord alone, and not the tenant; but at the same time he believed the landlords were prepared to make all reasonable sacrifices. He had voted in favour of the noble Lord's proposition (Lord John Russell's) for a fixed duty; but it was not his opinion now that a fixed duty would be the best, because sacrifices must be made where the food of the people was concerned. He was in favour of an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, but without applying the principle to every other article. If they were to do away with all import duties, and to throw the whole burdens of the country upon direct taxation, he should be opposed to free trade. There was one direct tax from which the country would be glad to be relieved, and there would not be a more cordial supporter of that object than himself; and there were certain articles the duties on which might not only be relaxed, but additional revenue obtained. The right hon. Baronet had boasted, that although he had taken so many taxes off, there had been an increase of revenue. Why did he not apply that principle to the consumption of tea, sugar, and coffee? If they were to legislate, let them legislate for the labouring man who toiled from morning till night to earn a scanty support for his family—legislate for the artisan, and all the good expected by the right hon. Baronet would arise.

MR. GORING could not see what preference could be given in favour of the Government plan of 4*s*., as compared with the duty of 8*s*., which had been proposed by the noble Lord opposite. He admired the tact and skill with which the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) had brought forward his measure. The naturally candid disposition of the noble Lord opposite, would have led him to state to the House what measures he was about to propose in 1846, and thus have caused their failure. But the delusive policy of the right hon. Baronet was likely to carry the measure safely, with the aid of a party that might aptly be called the Ministerial body guard. Hon. Gentlemen said that this was a landlord's question; and they asked the landlords to make the sacrifice which the repeal of the Corn Laws would involve. But he would ask these hon. Gentlemen, was that the reason why they had hitherto supported the Corn Laws? He should be ashamed of himself if he had supported them from such selfish motives. Those hon. Gentlemen, to use a Treasury expression, came down to the House whining to the landowners, and asking them to make this sacrifice. Now, he would tell them that it was not by the large landed proprietors that loss would be sustained. By the extended use of machinery, and thus diminishing the number of labourers—by putting up fewer buildings, they might be able to meet the expense. It was the smaller proprietors, who depended upon their rents to meet their jointures and mortgages—it was such men as these that would suffer. It was admitted on all hands that by this measure the small farmer would be swept from the face of the earth. The right hon. Secretary at War had stated that if the hills of Wiltshire were cultivated as they ought to be, all the labourers in the county would be fully employed. He supposed he meant by that that if the farmer would double the produce obtained from the soil, he might meet the difficulty. That might be the case with respect to the farmer, whether he grew three quarters of wheat at 60*s*., or five quarters at 40*s*.; but the tithe owner would undoubtedly suffer, as his income was bound down by the Commutation Act to the price of corn; and this would, therefore, be a serious difference to him. He should certainly oppose this measure to the best of his ability; and he and his Friend would have this consolation at least, that neither the clamour of a faction nor the threatening countenance of a

fickle tyrant, had deterred them from doing what they believed to be their duty: that it would not be through their means the country was rendered dependent upon foreigners for the national supply of food; that they would not hear the curses of ruined farmers ringing in their ears; and that it was not through their folly or cowardice that the agricultural labourer was driven from his happy home to the vice and sordid misery of the manufacturing towns.

Mr. BRIGHT: I rise principally with the view of making a few observations upon the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Lincolnshire (Lord Worsley). The noble Lord said he was of opinion that even now the imposition of a fixed duty of *5s.* would settle this question. Now, I have here a speech delivered by that noble Lord in Lincolnshire; and as he, upon one occasion, amused the House with long extracts from the speeches of Members of the Government, perhaps he will not object to hear read a short extract from one of his own, delivered as recently as three years ago. At a meeting held in Lincolnshire, the noble Lord said—

"Something had been said about compromise. About a year ago he thought something like compromise might have been effected; but that day had gone by. There was at present only one ground of compromise, and that was a final settlement of the question, whereby agitation would be for ever stopped. It was agitation on this subject that was doing all the injury, and the stopping of that was the only compromise that could be for a moment entertained. Some had supposed that it was the intention of Sir Robert Peel to propose a fixed duty with a descending scale, to go down gradually until it vanished altogether. That would not stop agitation. It would go on as violently as ever, until the last shilling of duty was removed."

The noble Lord then gave a dissertation upon the peculiar burdens on land, which it is not necessary for me now to quote. I quite agree with the noble Lord that there can be no cessation of the agitation of this question, until all the duties upon the importation of corn are finally abolished; and I am sure that he who thinks differently must have formed, indeed, an imperfect idea of that amount of public opinion which is now concentrated in one universal demand for the total and immediate abolition of the Corn Laws. The hon. Member who preceded me has referred—and I wonder at his imprudence—to the mortgages and incumbrances upon the property of landed proprietors. Now, I do hope that the time has nearly come when the landed proprietors in this House will not subject themselves to such imputations as have, with some justice, been heaped upon them, by again bringing forward their own extravagancies or imprudence, their mortgages and incumbrances, as the justification for a law to raise the price of food, in order to secure to them a rent for their property, which, in reality, it is not worth. I recollect, in one of Mr. Dickens' works, that he gives an account of an election for the dignified office of parish beadle, on which occasion the walls were covered with placards, with "Vote for Scroggins and eleven small children." Why, there is scarcely, even in that, anything more pitiable than it is to witness the great landowners of this country coming here and talking of the incumbrances upon their estates, or of the necessity of providing fortunes for their grown-up daughters. To come, however, to the question more immediately before the House. That question is now greatly narrowed, and it is no longer whether we shall have protection or not, but whether protection shall be immediately abolished, or shall linger on for three years more. Now, I do not like to say anything which may appear in opposition to the Ministers, because in the speeches which they delivered in the last debate upon this question, I have observed so much of what I believe to be perfect honesty and sincerity in the course which they are now pursuing, that I feel unwilling to say anything which might make it appear that in my opinion they were falling short of the duty which at this important period they owe to the country. But I must say that Her Majesty's Government have admitted all our case; and if there be any man on either side of the House, who, in consequence of the speeches of the Members of the Government, has come to the conclusion that protection should be abolished, I can't think it possible that such a man would say that we should wait for three years before that abolition took place. I think that every argument offered by the Gentlemen in justification of their measure, justifies still further our proposition for the immediate repeal; and I think it would be a condemnation of the arguments of the Government if we now stopped short of immediate repeal. The impending famine in Ireland is either a reality or it is not. The Government tell us that they have established stores for the accumulation of grain, to be sold to the people at a moderately low price. Both the right hon. Gentlemen who have spoken, said that they could not come to

this House and call for a vote of public money, whilst there was a law in existence imposing a duty of 16*s.* or 17*s.* upon the admission of foreign corn. I would ask him, could they come and demand 200,000*l.*, 300,000*l.*, or 400,000*l.*, as they may be obliged to do in the course of this Session, and ask the clergy and the public generally to subscribe money in charity to feed the people of Ireland, while this House maintains a law which imposes a duty which narrows the circle whence our supply of food can be drawn, which must make prices higher here, and must limit the whole supply from which the people of the United Kingdom can be fed? The right hon. Gentleman said he could not propose to allow maize and the inferior grains for the food of pigs and cattle to be admitted at a nominal duty, whilst there was a heavy duty upon the nobler grain—wheat, which was more especially the food of man. I know not, then, how he can reconcile the imposition of a duty varying from four to ten shillings on the food of man in this period of great scarcity, whilst he allows maize, the inferior grain, to be admitted duty free. The reasons for the delay in removing the duty stated by the Government, were curious. One of them was, that the right hon. Gentleman thought that his measure might meet with rather less opposition. Now I suspect the right hon. Gentleman has found out by this time that that idea was altogether erroneous. I believe it would have been impossible, whatever were the measures proposed, even if they had come directly from the council of the Anti-Corn-Law League, that they could have met with a more determined resistance than they have already encountered, or than they are about to encounter both in this and the other House of Parliament. The right hon. Baronet, in his speech the other night, almost said that he was willing to accept of immediate repeal; and I believe every one must feel that there are no hon. Members in this House, not even amongst those who sit on this side of the House, who are more firmly of opinion in their conscience that the immediate repeal is the best thing for this country in every way, than are the Members of the Government themselves. The protectionists can scarcely have any objection to it, for they have always said that it was a farmer's question, and not a landlord's question. If it is a farmer's question, then, why not settle it as the farmers wish it to be settled? There cannot be a doubt of their opinion upon the subject. Then, if there be, I challenge hon. Gentlemen opposite to point out one case in which any number of farmers have agreed that three years' delay previous to the removal of protection would be preferable to the immediate abolition which we propose. You say that the agitation of this question is the worst thing that can happen. The noble Lord the Member for Lincolnshire says so distinctly. What guarantee have you that you will not have as much agitation now as if the law had not been altered in the least? I am afraid that hon. Gentlemen opposite are still clinging to the gains of that protection. I believe that you cling to the three years' delay because you fancy that you can gain something from it. As far as I am associated with the Anti-Corn-Law League, I can assure you that that agitation will go on till the question is fairly settled. We were bound by hundreds of pledges to bring this question before the House, and still more are we bound to do so by a firm conviction of the necessity and the justice of the measure which we propose; and I am sure that the free traders throughout the country will thank my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton for giving the House this opportunity of deciding once for all upon this question. If the House pass this measure, it will have again to discuss it before this Session is over; and if we do not gain the immediate repeal this Session, we shall have to discuss it every Session until the law is fairly abolished. We commenced our agitation with that object—we have carried it on for no other—and you may rest assured that we shall continue to persevere in the principles which we believe to be right, and to press them upon this House and the country until this great question is finally and fairly settled.

SIR R. PEEL said: Sir, I presume it is not the wish of the great body of the House that we should continue this debate, to which twelve days have already been devoted. There are some points raised in this debate with respect to which I should wish to give some explanation; but as I shall probably have other opportunities of offering that explanation, I shall, in what I have now to say, simply confine myself to the question whether it be desirable that the repeal of the Corn duties should be immediate, or whether they should continue, as Her Majesty's Government propose, for a period of three years. Now, I am

bound to say that if you look singly and abstractedly to the emergency which exists in Ireland—I am bound to say, that in that case I think the better measure would be the immediate suspension of all duties. Suppose we had taken the course pursued in former years, and had, by Act of Parliament, suspended the duties for a period of eight months—that is to say, until the month of August or September next, there would then be an absolute repeal of all duties, or the maintenance of a nominal duty only; but we should have to determine in the interim what provision should be made with respect to the period when the suspension would expire. Those who contend that the Corn Laws ought to be immediately repealed, would of course be perfectly satisfied with a measure carrying out their object. An immediate repeal would provide for the accomplishment of their purpose, and it would also provide for the removal of all duties during the approaching scarcity in Ireland. But that is not the universal opinion. There are many who think the Corn Laws ought not to be repealed. Her Majesty's Government having to decide upon this question on the 20th of December, after they had been recalled to office, thought that it might be possible at the same time to make provision for the emergency in Ireland, and to lay the foundation of a settlement of the Corn Law question. I have frankly admitted that the provision made for the present emergency is not quite so complete as would be made if you removed the duty altogether. But what Her Majesty's Government had to consider was, on the 20th of December, as I have already stated, how they could best effect the double object of providing for the emergency in Ireland, and at the same time of trying to gain the assent of the Legislature to laying the foundation for the total removal of all duties; and in the hope of reconciling those two objects in the best way possible, Her Majesty's Government framed the proposition which is now under the consideration of the House. With respect to the apprehensions of scarcity in Ireland, we certainly do not altogether remove the duties on grain, but we propose to remove the duty altogether on Indian corn; we propose to remove altogether the duty on rice; and though not, perhaps, so nearly affecting the people of Ireland, we propose to remove it also altogether from cattle and meat. With respect to wheat, too, we place that in a very different position to what it was in before; and we materially reduce the duty, which at present absolutely prevents you taking out of bond that superior description of wheat which is most important for the purpose of mixing with the inferior descriptions which enter into the market, and affect the average prices which regulate the duty on the other. I have before me a memorial signed by the whole of the millers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and they state that the general weight of the bushel of corn in ordinary years averages from about 61 lbs. to 63 lbs., whilst in the present year it is not above 58 lbs. They say it would be of the utmost importance if they could have access to the better qualities of wheat which are in bond, for the purpose of mixing with the inferior wheat, and they therefore pray for immediate repeal. The duty at present upon that wheat, however, is 17*s.*; and as there is a great quantity of inferior wheat in the market, the price appears to be low, and the duty consequently remains high, so high as to operate almost as a prohibition to taking out of bond that quality of wheat which it is of the utmost importance to have for mixing with the inferior wheat. The present proposal of Her Majesty's Government certainly does not remove the duty on wheat altogether, but it will considerably reduce the present duty of 17*s.*; and it will do more—it will give a guarantee that in no one case can the duty rise above 10*s.*, and there must be a very rapid fall in the price of wheat, which is not to be expected, to bring the duty up to 10*s.* The maximum duty at present is 20*s.* Under the proposal of Her Majesty's Government the maximum would be 10*s.*, and it is not probable even if the price should fall to some extent, that it would be more than 5*s.* or 6*s.* for some time to come. That is the proposal of Her Majesty's Government with respect to wheat. Then with respect to barley. The present duty is 7*s.*: we propose, certainly, not to reduce the duty to a merely nominal one; but we believe that it will not exceed 2*s.* instead of 7*s.* The duty upon oats is now 6*s.* Under the proposal of Her Majesty's Government it will not exceed 2*s.*; but both in the case of barley and oats, observe the guarantee which is given as an encouragement to importation. In barley there would be a guarantee that the duty should not rise above 5*s.*, and in the case of oats not above 4*s.* a quarter. The duty on rye is at present 8*s.* 6*d.* Under the proposal of the Government it will be reduced to 2*s.* The

present duty on beans is 6*s.* 6*d.*, which will also be reduced to 2*s.* On peas, a similar reduction will be made. I am speaking now of the apprehension of a scarcity of food in Ireland; and I admit that the proposal is less perfect than if the duty had been altogether removed. But I say, that in the present state of public feeling in this country, you cannot look at this question abstractedly. I think it would be a very inconsiderate course at the present moment to propose a mere suspension of the duty, to endure for eight months; for we should make no advance by such a suspension towards the final settlement of the question. At the end of that period the difficulties in the way of dealing with the question would be just as great as ever: the public feeling would be equally excited; and I confess I cannot see at all how a suspension of duties for eight months would tend to a satisfactory settlement of the question; and it is of paramount importance to be certain of the footing on which the Corn Laws shall hereafter stand. My opinion is decidedly that it is for the public interest that the question of the Corn Laws should be either at once settled, or that the foundation for a settlement should now be laid, and that there should be a certain assurance on the part of the country that at no remote period the duties upon the importation of foreign grain should cease. The proposal of Her Majesty's Government gives that assurance. I was certainly impressed from what passed the other night, with the belief that the hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House were inclined to prefer the immediate repeal. When I use the word "repeal," I mean the reduction to a nominal duty. The hon. Member for Somersetshire certainly did declare positively in favour of immediate repeal. I may be erroneous in my impression of the degree of assent which the hon. Member gave to the immediate repeal—I speak merely hypothetically; but when the hon. Gentleman spoke, his declaration was certainly received as implying a preference of immediate repeal, nor was any dissent then expressed by him. Her Majesty's Government have proposed a suspension of the repeal for the period of three years, partly from the impression that that proposal was preferable in itself to the immediate repeal, partly from a hope that it would be more acceptable to those who represent the agricultural interest; and it was under the impression that the immediate repeal was viewed by many, as I know it is, most decided friends of the agricultural interest, and the main advocates of their rights, with the same approbation which I attributed to the expressions of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, that I said, as I now repeat, that if the representatives of the agricultural interest—if those best acquainted with the feelings and wishes of the agriculturists, should really prefer immediate repeal to a suspension of the repeal for three years, I have no doubt whatever that, under these circumstances, by uniting their forces with those of the hon. Gentlemen who sit on the opposite side of the House, they will be enabled to carry that proposition. Should they do that, my paramount object being to lay the foundation of an adjustment of this question by the repeal of the Corn Laws, I shall accept the amended proposal of an immediate repeal. But, at the same time, my own opinion in favour of the gradual removal of duties proposed by Government remains unchanged. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Durham threatens us with a continued agitation. Sir, I am very sorry for it. I think such an agitation will be unreasonable. I cannot answer for the agricultural party as to the course they would pursue in case a great change of this kind were carried; but I don't think an attempt would be made by them to disturb a settlement of this kind when once made. [An hon. MEMBER: I think there would be.] I am sorry to hear that observation, because that might certainly justify agitation. But, if there were a general acquiescence in the measure, I must say I think that a continued agitation on the part of the Anti-Corn-Law League, considering that there was a Parliamentary assurance that those duties would cease after a lapse of three years, and that, during the interval, there would be but a low duty as compared with the existing duty, I must say I think that a continued agitation under such circumstances would be unreasonable. I must say, moreover, that I do not think that agitation would be successful. The hon. Gentleman says, that year after year a Motion would be made for absolute repeal. Now, it might be made; but as year after year the time would be approaching when absolute repeal must take place, I cannot think that much interest would be attached to the Motion. I think there are a great number of persons who would then withdraw from the Anti-Corn-Law League—a great number of persons who would say that this is not an un-

reasonable settlement. Considering the differences which prevail upon the subject —considering the prospect that the duty is to expire in three years, and that every day would be bringing us nearer to the period of an absolute repeal of the duty, or at least of its reduction to a nominal amount, I cannot help thinking—considering also that the duty would be much lower than it has hitherto been—I cannot help thinking that whatever may be the menaces of continued agitation, that agitation would be of a very different character from that which would prevail if no attempt were made to adjust this question. If we had proposed a total and immediate repeal, I think we must have abandoned all hope of success. When a proposal is made, people are naturally inclined to take a different view of it from that which they would take if some other proposal had been made; and I cannot help thinking, that if we had proposed an immediate repeal, the hon. Member for Somersetshire would not have expressed for it any preference. I do think that if the proposal of Her Majesty's Government had been for immediate repeal, we would have met with such a degree of opposition, that we must have abandoned all hope of carrying the measure. Our proposal has been made partly from a preference for the Motion abstractedly on its own merits, and partly from a sincere desire to meet the wishes and to conciliate the feelings of those who are the immediate representatives of the agricultural interest; but if immediate repeal be carried in preference to deferred repeal, I intend to accept the Amendment. Yes, my conviction of the policy of an adjustment of the question is such, that I intend to do what I can to promote the success of that amended measure; but I cannot be answerable for the effect of such an Amendment. It will not affect my own course; but it is impossible I can answer for its ultimate success. I prefer the deferred repeal to immediate repeal, for this reason, that Her Majesty's Government intend to propose other measures connected with the landed interest. One objection to deferred repeal is, that it will lead to two prices, one now and one at the end of three years. But I do not see the panic now. I mean a panic greatly depressing the price of wheat. But I have a strong impression that we are depressing the price of wheat by this protracted discussion. I have a strong impression that the owner of every quarter of wheat now sold is receiving 1*s*. 6*d*. or 2*s*. less than he would receive if this question were settled. It being quite notorious that you can have no great supply from the Continent, there being other countries since we began this debate, from which exportation has been prohibited and importation encouraged; I cannot help thinking that there may be, on the part of the tenant-farmer, a perfect assurance that the degree of competition with which he will have to contend will be very trifling indeed; and if he once knew that the mind of the Legislature were made up on the subject of the corn trade, my own impression is, that there would be a slight and immediate increase of price. Considering, too, that we accompany this measure with another for affording facilities for the drainage of land— [Hon. Members: They will not be accepted.] There is no compulsion to accept them; but, if they be accepted, there will be an opportunity in cases of settled property of raising money for improvements on more moderate terms than it can be procured for at present. I cannot help thinking also, that as it will be known there is to be a competition at the end of three years, the minds of landed proprietors and of tenants will be directed to the improvement of land, and that at the end of three years, partly by the aid of public money, and partly by the exertions of individuals, we shall place ourselves in a more favourable position to compete with the produce of foreign countries, than if we opened the ports immediately, with the possibility of a good harvest all over the Continent before us. These were the reasons which induced the Government to make the proposal which they have made. We don't think there will be the panic some apprehend at the end of three years. If the foreign corn grower thinks he can overwhelm our market at a duty reduced from 4*s*. to 1*s*., I think he will be very much mistaken. If there should be a great demand here, the result will be a rise in the price of land in foreign countries, a consequent rise in the cost of production, and diminished advantages to the foreign producer. These were the general reasons which induced Her Majesty's Government to introduce this measure. They will do what they can to carry it; but, again, I say, if another proposal is approved of, they will not from pique or mortification abandon the measure, but will give effect to it so amended by those whom they will accept as the best judges of the plan most conducive to the agricultural interest.

Mr. G. PALMER rose to address the

House, but was received with cries of "Hear, hear!" "Question, question!" "Chair, chair!" "Order, order!" which continued the whole time he was speaking. He was understood to say: I think a Minister who had the means to obtain every information which no other individual in the country could attain—I say, when he did receive that information which no other could have, he should have given both sides of the question. It had been stated by clergymen of the Established Church, and by Roman Catholic clergymen, that there was an average crop; and by others it was stated that it did not amount to more than one-third. The right hon. Baronet has identified himself with the free-trade principles, which would destroy the property of the country—which would be the destruction of agricultural property. [*Interruption.*] If hon. Gentlemen think I am out of order I shall sit down. The right hon. Baronet referred to the agitation threatened by the hon. Member for Durham; but does not the right hon. Baronet know that the agitation of that party will continue while there is one single thing they imagine they want? What have those people done to promote the agricultural interest? Nothing. On the contrary, they have robbed those interests. I do not condemn any one for improving his fortune by industry, by manufactures, or by any particular trade; but, in my opinion, the interests of all should be considered—the interests of the one should not be exalted over that of another; nor should the interests of the one be considered distinct or separate from the other. Those men who have by manufactures amassed great wealth, what do they care to give 1,000*l.* to promote agitation? and this agitation will go on. I am totally opposed to the repeal of the protective duties. The hon. Member continued to address the House for some time; but, notwithstanding his great exertion to make himself heard, the interruptions were so numerous that they rendered all his attempts abortive, and for nearly ten minutes not a word he uttered was audible in the gallery.

LORD J. RUSSELL said: If the Committee will allow me, I will endeavour, without discussing the general question, which has been already discussed for several nights, and which may again be discussed on the second reading, to state my views on the several propositions before us; and I shall take this course, because it has been taken by hon. Gentlemen who have spoken, and because it may upon the whole, be more convenient to take a view of the whole of the Amendments together, and their bearing upon the measures generally, than to consider each separately. Before I do so, however, I wish to explain in regard to a statement made on a former evening by the hon. Member for Somersetshire. The hon. Member seemed to suppose that I stated that the agricultural party were not willing to allow a suspension of the Corn Laws, even to meet a case of famine. I never made any such statement. What I said was, that supposing, as was alleged, the famine was not so great as was stated, or that the potato crop had not failed to the extent reported, that that circumstance afforded us a good opportunity for settling the question of the Corn Laws, instead of waiting for a year of greater scarcity, when the difficulties would be increased. That is the view in which I wish to look upon the proposition; and I think, therefore, that this is a time peculiarly applicable to the settlement of the question. Many propositions have been made for the purpose of improving the plan of the Government. And first, with regard to the one to which my noble Friend the Member for Lincolnshire adverted, the proposal for a *5s.* fixed duty. I do not think the objections made to the application of a fixed duty are, in the main, fatal to the measure. I never did consider that either a *5s.* fixed duty or an *8s.* fixed duty would necessarily raise the price of corn to that amount. I believe the Handloom Weavers' Commission, composed of such men as Mr. Senior and Mr. Lloyd, took a view which I am inclined to adopt when they said that a duty of *5s.* per quarter might raise the price of wheat only 1*s.* a quarter. But I should not think it fit at the present time to vote for a proposition which would not be a settlement with respect to the Corn Laws. I do think that a fixed duty of *8s.*, if agreed to, either in 1840 or 1841, or a duty of *5s.*, if agreed to, last year, might have been a settlement for a number of years. I believe that with those duties there would have been a regular trade in corn, and a large importation, and that those who now complain of the present law would have been satisfied. But I would not commit myself to vote for a proposition at the present moment which would be likely to continue agitation, and to keep the farmer in prolonged uncertainty. I say, that having been told in 1842 that the Act which now exists was a settlement

of the question; and having been told in 1846, by the authors of that measure, that it was a complete and signal failure—that the sliding-scale, far from being a scale, as then represented, which provided for years of scarcity as regularly and as exactly as it provided for years of abundance, was, on the contrary, in the very first year of difficulty, found to be a sliding-scale which would not slide, and therefore must be abandoned—I say, that if after that has been abandoned, a new plan of protection were enacted as a permanent law, and if you saw then, as you would see, the Anti-Corn-Law League reinforced by numbers who consider that to be the triumphant and successful side, the farmers would still be in a state of uncertainty: they would be ignorant in what manner they should make bargains with their landlords; they would be uncertain as to what would be the probable price of corn for a number of years; and, instead of a settlement of the question, you would have a renewal and continuance of agitation. Therefore, for my part, while I regret that my noble Friend the Member for Lincolnshire did not, in a former year, concur with me that a fixed duty would form the ground of a settlement of the question, I cannot say to him, or to any one who is now convinced that that proposition would be an effectual settlement of the question, that I do believe that it would be advantageous to the agricultural interest, or to any other interest, that such a proposition should now be carried. Well, then, I need not notice the proposition for the continuance of the modified sliding-scale proposed by the Government for three years longer. With respect to the proposal for the continuance of the duty proposed by the Government beyond the three years, with the view of making that a permanent arrangement, I think it liable to the same objections as a fixed duty. It would continue the agitation from this time to the general election, and from the general election till some time after; it would be a cause of dissensions, heartburnings, and discord between the various classes of the community, and we should not arrive at that which is to be desired—a general agreement, or, if not agreement, acquiescence in the law enacted by Parliament on the subject. I come now to the proposition at present before the House, brought forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, who, consistently with all his former conduct, now proposes that the duty on corn should immediately and forthwith cease. I must say, that were I to compare the two propositions as being made by two independent Members of this House, I should consider the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton both more wise as an abstract proposition, and more effective as a practical measure, than the plan proposed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I consider it so because, instead of their being now, as there has been in some years, very abundant harvests and great stores of corn on the Baltic and elsewhere, which might, by being imported into this country, depress the price, it does so happen, that at the present time those stores have been emptied by the great demand in Belgium and other countries; and the harvest of last year was not in quality so good as to make it likely that any great depreciation of price could be effected in the present year. That being the case, if the corn laws were immediately repealed, there would be no panic following that repeal. The right hon. Gentleman says, and says truly, that there has been no panic following his proposition; yet his proposition would let in whatever corn is likely to be brought in for the next three or four months at a duty of 4*s.*; and I cannot believe that a duty of 4*s.* would make the difference of panic or no panic; or, that if there were no panic at the prospect of a duty of 4*s.*, there would be a panic with total repeal. But if you had immediate repeal, you would have this further advantage, that there would no longer be any question on the subject. The farmers would at once apply their minds to that which your protective laws have hitherto prevented them from doing, viz., to obtain from the soil the largest produce by means of the utmost exertion of intelligence; by inquiry, by energy, and by all that activity which it is the effect of monopoly, restriction, and protection to relax and impede. With this protection, small as it may be considered, which is established by a sliding-scale varying from 10*s.* to 4*s.*, I do not think it likely that the same amount of exertion will be employed by the farmers as if it did not exist. That protection will be counted for something for the time, and various speculations will be formed as to what will happen in 1849—some anticipating an immense influx of foreign corn producing a totally different state of the country, and others taking a different view, and wishing to prolong this condition of protection, hoping that some future Parlia-

ment may re-enact it; so that between the farmers and the manufacturers the three years will be a period of doubt, irritation, and excitement. For these reasons and others—for there are others—with which I will not trouble the House at this late hour of the night, I consider, taking the two propositions by themselves, that that made by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton is the better. But the case which I now have to consider is the case of the Government proposing a plan for the settlement of this important question, on which hitherto there has been the greatest resistance in this House, and on which there may still be resistance and opposition on the part of the majority of the other House of Parliament. I am not aware what view the other House may take of this subject. I must listen, therefore, to what is said by the Prime Minister, who has undertaken the settlement of this question. If the right hon. Gentleman had undertaken this task in a way entirely objectionable, I might favour any amendment I thought desirable, endangering his proposition; but he has undertaken it in a manner which, in three years at all events, will produce a final and complete settlement of the question. The right hon. Gentleman has said, in accordance with his declaration of a former night, that he has reasons which induce him to prefer his proposition. I own I do not consider those reasons in themselves very conclusive. One reason is, that it is more favourable to the landed interest. I will not say what view the landlords will take; but I am more and more confirmed in the opinion that the farmers throughout the country do not value this temporary protection of three years. What the right hon. Gentleman has stated only confirms the view which we on this side took at the time with respect to the Canada Corn Bill. When that was introduced we said it was dangerous to introduce a Bill giving a monopoly to a single Colony which it never had before; and that when it was necessary to take it away, a feeling of injustice and injury would be raised. I am afraid that a similar feeling will be raised among the landlords by giving them this three years' protection. It will not reconcile them to the loss of the benefit at the expiration of that term. The right hon, Gentleman makes another statement, to the effect that though the Committee were to decide by a majority in favour of immediate repeal, he yet would use his best efforts to promote the success of the measure so amended; but he states at the same time that he will not answer for the result; and he likewise adds—what is a most important statement—that, in his opinion, if he had brought forward a measure for immediate repeal instead of that which he has proposed, he would have failed in his endeavour to settle the question. I never think it right to vote in this House for any measure or resolution which I do not think it desirable should succeed. Now, supposing that there is a majority in this House in favour of the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, and that I am one in that majority, I then gain in terms a better settlement of the question than that which the right hon. Gentleman proposes. But what should I lose? I should lose that measure which the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), as the organ of the Government, has introduced; for which he has made himself responsible; and of the success of which, though he cannot guarantee it, he entertains, as I do myself, strong hope. Upon weighing the advantages of these two questions, I say I will not incur the responsibility of assisting to carry the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. It is far better, as I conceive, to promote the measure which has been introduced by the right hon. Baronet. I believe myself that if this House carries that measure—as I trust it will do—on the third reading by at least as large a majority as that which decided the other day in favour of going into Committee, the House of Lords, respecting the decision of this House, will most probably accede to the Bill thus carried up to them as the measure of the First Minister of the Crown. I feel by no means confident that they would carry a measure which would be capable of being represented as the identical measure of the Anti-Corn-Law League. But I do consider that, in the present state of affairs, the adoption of this measure by the present Parliament, without any dissolution, without any further conflict of interests, would be of the very greatest advantage. I believe that, if it is carried—though, as I have said, there may be some excitement, that excitement will gradually subside, and the different classes of society will be better reconciled to each other than they have been for many years past; and that, Sir, speaking besides and beyond this corn question, is to any one who values the institutions of this country a most important consideration. Because, without attending to particular threats or particular declarations, it is

impossible not to see that a great popular agitation upon any one question, carried on from year to year, may extend to other subjects, and may affect some of the most valuable parts of our institutions. I wish, therefore, most ardently to see this question settled; and after weighing in my own mind in what manner I should act in order to obtain that settlement, I think, upon the whole, that the plan most conducive to this end will be to support, against every Amendment, the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. I do not think that any question brought before this House ought to be considered merely on the ground of the preference of one proposition over another. I think it should be considered with reference to times and to circumstances, with reference to the general views Parliament may take, and with regard to the ulterior state of the country. Having said thus much, I would beg for one moment to refer to a statement made to-night by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that if he had proposed the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, he thinks that proposition would have failed. Now I understood that right hon. Gentleman, on a former occasion, to say that he regretted I had not undertaken to settle this question; and that he thought I should have been successful in such an attempt. I will own I was surprised at that statement; for though I fully believe that the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) would have supported me most fairly in any measure I might have brought forward for the settlement of this question, yet I think, during the time that has elapsed since he introduced the present measure, he must have heard statements and objections enough to convince him that those who would have followed him in that course, and would have supported me in the proposition of such a measure—I being in office, and he out of office—would have been very few in number. My belief, I may fairly state, is that not more than forty Members, or somewhere about that number, perhaps fifty, would have followed him. ["No!"] Some hon. Gentlemen seem to intimate that I am making an exaggerated statement; but at all events I do not believe that, if all the Members of the present Cabinet in this House had gone with me, I should have had a sufficient number to enable me to obtain a majority on the first proposition for going into Committee. An hon. Friend of mine has stated to-night that he understood me to say that I should have been very sorry to see a dissolution of Parliament, because I should not have expected that a dissolution would have given a majority in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws. My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, who made this statement, has not rightly understood me. What I said was, that I did think it desirable, and I do think it desirable, that there should not be a dissolution of Parliament upon this question. I think all the statements that have been made in this House as to the incompetency of the present House of Commons to decide the question of the Corn Laws are founded on an ignorance and misapprehension of the Constitution. I consider that when a Parliament is elected, that Parliament is to provide for all the most important affairs of the country, be they foreign or be they domestic, according to the best of its judgment and discretion. I can conceive no assertion of an opposite principle—no assertion that the House of Commons is not competent to decide such a question as the present, which would not lead to the doctrine that we are not competent to decide any question of great importance unless we have been immediately elected by the people for the express purpose of determining such question. Such a doctrine, let me observe, is most democratic in its nature—a doctrine which leads almost to annual Parliaments, almost to the conviction, that unless elected for that express purpose, Members are not justified in giving their votes upon any great measure. This question bears directly upon the general powers of the House of Commons; and I may say, with regard to one question which arose out of the settlement of the house of Hanover, that I conceive the Parliament which was elected for three years was perfectly justified in prolonging its existence for seven years, and thereby saving the country from anarchy and rebellion. Now, if I am right in that opinion, will any one say that the House of Commons, which was competent to prolong its own powers from three years to seven, exceeds its powers in claiming to settle the question of the Corn Laws? I might also refer, if it were necessary to do so, to the circumstances which occurred with reference to the Union with Scotland and Ireland. I do not meddle with the question as it regards the engagements into which particular Members may have entered, or as to what their feelings may be with respect to their own private honour or their public character. My conviction is that this House, as at present constituted, is perfectly competent to settle the

question of the Corn Laws; and unless there were a great popular—a great national feeling the other way, I conceive that no one can with propriety maintain a contrary opinion. But having stated that I consider the present House of Commons competent to determine this question, I may add that I think it desirable there should not be a dissolution. I do not entertain this opinion because I consider that in the event of a dissolution we should not obtain a majority in Parliament for the repeal of the Corn Laws. My belief is, that we should have such a majority. But my belief also is, that that majority would only be attained after a great collision of opinion, after very angry feelings had been excited in the course of the elections; and that, under those circumstances, such a majority would hardly have that weight with the other House of Parliament which I think a majority of the present House of Commons is likely to exercise upon its decisions. I think the question would then excite much greater discordance between classes; that men would be much more apt to stand upon pledges they had given, against their more reflecting opinions; and that we should be for some years in a state of agitation on the subject which would be most injurious to the country. For these additional reasons, therefore, I am going to take the only course which it seems to me —after pondering upon this matter most seriously—to be my duty to the country to follow. I am going to take the course of voting with the Government against this Amendment, and against any other Amendments that are likely to be proposed in Committee. I shall be prepared to vote with them upon every stage of this Bill; and I think the interests of this country are deeply involved in the speedy, safe, and tranquil settlement of this great question.

Sir W. JOLLIFFE was anxious to address a few words to the Committee in explanation of the vote he was about to give, without making any reference, if he could possibly help it, to the debate on the Corn Law, on which, however, he should have been glad to speak had the opportunity been afforded him. He had always consistently voted against the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, on the question of the Corn Law, and it was his intention still to vote against that hon. Gentleman. But if he did not enter into some explanation in doing so, he might be liable to misrepresentation; for he desired it to be understood that it was out of no preference which he entertained for the measures of the Government that he voted against the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. As long as a firm body could be found in this House, and in another place, and a much larger body out of doors, he should cherish the hope that those measures would be defeated. The measure was objectionable in every point of view. It was most objectionable, even on his own showing. He said it was to meet an emergency for which it was not at all calculated; and then, as if not to leave poor consistency a single inch to stand upon, an hon. Gentleman proposed a fixed duty, which could not be maintained when prices rose to a height when foreign corn would be really wanted. If they were to have a great change, let them have it at once, for it would be even less dangerous to the country than at the end of three years. The country was now prosperous; agriculture had been, for the last six months, in a flourishing condition; the farmers had straight accounts with their landlords—they could, therefore, better endure the measure introduced in an intelligible straightforward way, than in the insidious manner in which it had been at present introduced. It was like making a man live on half a meal a day before he underwent some great bodily exertion: would he not much sooner undertake it when in health than when in decay, and would he not be much more able to execute it? As it was with the body physical, so it was with the body politic. In conclusion, the hon. Gentleman said he should vote against Mr. Villiers' Motion, because he had always opposed it, and against the measures of Government, because they seemed to have neither justice nor common sense in them.

Mr. HUME hoped that on this occasion the speech of the hon. Member who had just resumed his seat would teach those who were about to divide the ranks of the supporters of the measures of Government what course they ought to adopt. After the speech of the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord J. Russell), he thought that every individual who was anxious to carry those measures should do his utmost to support the right hon. Baronet. He confessed that he should prefer an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws; but seeing what the right hon. Baronet had stated, he considered they would be acting in a manner that was calculated

to risk the great question; and on that ground he appealed to his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers) not on this occasion to divide their ranks. At any rate, he (Mr. Hume) could not give him his support.

Mr. BORTHWICK, amid cries of "Divide," and "Oh!" from the Opposition, moved that the Chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The Marquess of GRANBY would detain the Committee but a few moments. The noble Lord opposite had said that the present House of Commons was in a situation to settle this question. He contended that it was not, and he would prove it from the noble Lord's own observations. The noble Lord said, "If I had undertaken the government, and proposed the same measures that the Government now propose, I should not have been able to carry those measures in the House of Commons by a greater majority than 40 or 50." He now asked the Committee, in common fairness and candour, whether they thought they were in a position to carry those measures with satisfaction to the country or to those hon. Members who had always maintained that the Corn Law ought to be immediately repealed? He contended that it was not the opinion of that House. It had been proved by the noble Lord that it was not the opinion of that House. Even if the measure were right, this was not the way in which it should be carried.

Lord WORSLEY rose to explain. He feared his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) had misunderstood what he (Lord Worsley) had said in an earlier part of the evening, when he declared his intention of supporting the proposed duty of *5s.*, not as a measure of protection, but as one from which a revenue would be obtained. He would also take the opportunity of declaring that he saw nothing inconsistent in those opinions, or in the vote he was about to give, with the speech quoted by the hon. Member for the city of Durham (Mr. Bright).

The Earl of MARCH said, that the House was in such a state of confusion that they seemed to have forgotten the question before the Committee. He understood that his hon. Friend the Member for Evesham had moved that the Chairman should report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The Committee divided on the Question—Ayes 70; Noes 227: Majority 157.

List of the Ayes.

Adderley, C. B.
Alford, Visct.
Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Bailey, J., jun.
Bankes, G.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major.
Bramston, T. W.
Brisco, M.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Sir A. B.
Brotherton, J.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Clifton, J. T.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Deedes, W.
Du Pre, C. G.
Fielden, J.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Halford, Sir H.
Halsey, T. P.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hope, Sir J.
Hussey, T.
Ingestre, Visct.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Lawson, A.
Lowther, Sir J. H.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Martin, T. B.
Milnes, R. M.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, A. S.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Polhill, F.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Rolleston, Col.
Round, J.
Scott, hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Spooner, R.
Spry, Sir S. T.
Stanley, E.
Stuart, J.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Trotter, J.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Wodehouse, E.
Wyndham, Col. C.
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.
Borthwick, P.
Ferrand, B.

List of the Noes.

Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Antrobus, E.
Archbold, R.
Austen, Col.
Baillie, Col.
Baine, W.
Bannerman, A.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.
Barrington, Visct.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benbow, J.
Berkeley, hon. Craven
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Bernal, R.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Botfield, B.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, A.
Bowring, Dr.
Boyd, J.
Bright, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Busfeild, W.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Chelsea, Visct.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Childers, J. W.
Christie, W. D.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Colborne, hon. W. N. R.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, W. R.
Collett, J.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Currie, R.
Curteis, H. B.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Damer, hon. Col.
Davies, D. A. S.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Drummond, H. H.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, D.
Dundas, Adm.

Easthope, Sir J.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, W. T.
Egerton, Sir P.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Emlyn, Visct.
Entwisle, W.
Escott, B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Ewart, W.
Fielden, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Gibson, T. M.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hale, R. B.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hn. Sir J.
Hogg, J. W.
Hollond, R.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Mr. Ald.
Hurst, R. H.
Irton, S.
James, W.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, J.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jones, Capt.
Kelly, Sir FitzRoy
Kemble, H.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lambton, H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Layard, Capt.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
M'Carthy, A.
McGeachy, F. A.
McTaggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.
Mangles, R. D.
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Mildmay, H. St. J.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Napier, Sir C.
Neville, R.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Oswald, J.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pattison, J.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Plumridge, Capt.
Protheroe, E.
Pusey, P.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Col.
Ross, D. R.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Russell, C.
Sanderson, R.
Seymour, Lord
Shelburne, Earl of
Sheridan, R. B.
Smith, J. A.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerton, Visct.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strutt, E.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Tufnell, H.
Vane, Lord H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Walpole, S. H.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wynn, rt. hn. C. W. W.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Young, R.
Baring, H.

Question again put.

LORD J. MANNERS rose to notice a remark which had fallen from the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) that it was competent for the present Parliament to alter the Corn Laws, and that this case was analogous to the passing of the Septennial Act. He asserted that throughout English history there was not so disgraceful a case as that in which a Whig House of Commons, afraid to appeal to the country, and elected only for three years, had been led to vote that the same House should sit for a septennial period. He knew not what the noble Lord's present views might be; but he must say for himself that if the noble Lord's ardour to secure a long life to the present House of Commons should propose to extend its existence for a decennial period, he could venture to assure the noble Lord that he would have no more decided opponent than himself; and when the noble Lord said, that the public honour of that House was separable from the private honour of individuals, such a proposition could hardly be seriously maintained; for what was the public honour but the aggregate private honour of individuals? What! destroy the private honour of 120 or 130 individual Members of the House of Commons, and then hope that they could maintain by a constitutional fallacy the public character of the House of Commons? He said, if he had asked for any justification for the course which that great minority of the House had adopted, he should find it in the speech of the noble Lord the Member for London; and he would ask the House, after such a speech, after such arguments, whether it could refuse to postpone this discussion for any number of nights to allow those hon. Members who chose to express their opinions? For himself, he could conceive no such argument in favour of the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Evesham as that they had heard from the noble Lord. So long as his hon. Friend chose to divide the House on the question of adjournment, so long should he be happy, after the speech of the noble Lord, to divide with him.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL was sorry he had incurred the displeasure of the noble Lord; but really the penalty of adjourn-

ment seemed too heavy to inflict on the House for a speech of his (Lord J. Russell). He had said that no good result could arise from a dissolution; but he thought there might be one advantage from it. As far as he could see from the noble Lord's published opinions, the noble Lord said, that the measure of protection, which he considered it quite necessary to vote for as a benefit to the country in the present Parliament, he should, if re-elected to a new Parliament, consider it to be his duty to vote as illegal; and that the Corn Laws, instead of being maintained, should be repealed. He must confess that getting the noble Lord's vote would be an advantage from a dissolution of Parliament, and it would be the only one.

Sir A. BROOKE complained that several Irish Members had waited for thirteen nights, wishing to speak on this question, without ever getting an opportunity. This night, the whole time had been occupied by the hon. Members for Durham, Manchester, and Wolverhampton, by the noble Lord the Member for London, and the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, so that those who were in favour of protection had been prevented from speaking. Under these circumstances, he thought the call for a division very unfair, and should move that the House do now adjourn—that this debate be now adjourned.

Sir R. PEEL said, if they came to a vote now, it would not close the question on the Resolution. There were other amendments before the House, but probably the best course would to dispose first of the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. FERRAND said, he was prepared to justify the course they were pursuing that night, by reference to a speech of the right hon. Baronet, delivered on the 31st of January, 1840, in the debate on the vote of want of confidence in Ministers. Substitute the name of Stanley for that of Howick, and the exactness of the application was perfect. The hon. Member then read the passage referred to, to the effect that Lord Howick had quitted the Ministry of Lord Melbourne, because he had no confidence in its principles or professions. The hon. Member concluded by moving that the Chairman do now leave the chair.

Lord J. MANNERS wished to observe, in reply to the observations of the noble Lord, that if the noble Lord would have the kindness to refer with more care to that letter to which he alluded, he would perceive he was totally unjustified in drawing the conclusion he had from it, and that in that letter he had never said anything which could justify the noble Lord in drawing a conclusion that he would in a new Parliament vote for the present measure.

Mr. M. J. O'CONNELL said, it was really too bad that they should have perpetually quotations and opinions cited from former speeches on all occasions, and particularly on such an occasion as the present. He really wanted to know what any opinions expressed in a speech on a vote of want of confidence in a former Government had to do with the question of adjournment on the present occasion? As he did not want to see the character of that House lowered in the public estimation by such conduct, he, for one, rose to enter his solemn protest against such a course of factious opposition as a small minority of those who were opposed to the measure of Her Majesty's Government were now offering to it. Such a course could but bring the House of Commons into disrepute with the public.

Mr. G. BANKES said, that as the hon. Member (Mr. M. J. O'Connell) asked why hon. Gentlemen desired to speak upon this subject, viz., whether the repeal of the Corn Laws should be immediate, or according to the right hon. Baronet's proposition; he would tell him it was because the hon. Member for Essex (Mr. Palmer), as honourable a Member as any in the House—respectable as well for his long standing, as for his many other qualifications, was interrupted from the commencement of his speech until the conclusion—so much so, that even those who sat on the same side with him could scarcely catch a single observation he had made. When a Gentleman of such high character and standing, could meet with no more respect than that, it was surely foolish for other hon. Members to attempt to get a hearing. Whatever might be the trouble and inconvenience it occasioned, they (the protectionists) were determined to persevere in their course. For his own part, he felt that the observations made by right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) called for a reply.

House resumed.

Chairman reported progress. Committee to sit again following day.

House adjourned at half-past one o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 3, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2).

3ª. and passed. Public Works (Ireland) (No. 2); Drainage, &c. (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By the Duke of Richmond, from Owners and Occupiers of Land of Downham, and several other places, in favour of the Corn Laws.—By the Earl of Hardwicke, from Inhabitants of the Parish of Ashwell, and several other places, for Protection of the Agricultural Interest.—By Lord Monteagle, from Linen Merchants, Bleach Millowners, and others, on the River Maine, County of Antrim, against the Drainage (Ireland) Bill.—By Earl Powis, from the Bath Church of England Lay Association, against the proposed Union of St. Asaph and Bangor; and from the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Ripon, against the said Union, but in favour of the Appointment of a Bishop to the See of Manchester.—By the Marquess of Lansdowne, from Inhabitants of the Town of Lancaster, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws; and from Free Colonists of Van Diemen's Land, complaining of the great Increase in the Number of Convicts, for Inquiry, and for the Better Regulation of them.

THE CORN LAWS.

The EARL of HARDWICKE presented a number of petitions from various places in Cambridgeshire, against the proposed measure of Government in reference to the Corn Laws. The county from which those petitions came, was, he said, purely an agricultural county, and one in which, he asserted without fear of contradiction, the progress of agriculture had never so much advanced as since 1828, when the protection laws were passed. This had been particularly the case in that large portion of the county called the Isle of Ely, where such extensive works had been constructed, such a large amount of capital had been laid out, and such vast improvements effected, that the amount of food raised in it had greatly increased, and the fee-simple of the land nearly doubled. He would not say that all these improvements had taken place since 1828; but he might safely say that since that time the improvements had gone on more rapidly. In consequence of the introduction of the steam-engine, and the extent of drainage which had taken place, in one dyke alone nearly 500,000*l.* had been spent; the agriculturists had been able to raise such a vast quantity of food as not merely to meet the increase of population, but they had been enabled to export from Wisbeach a larger amount of wheat than had passed through any other port of Great Britain. In respect to the remaining part of the county, he held returns in his hand showing that there also there had been great progress made in the way of improvement. Since 1828, no fewer than eighteen parishes had been enclosed; and the consequence of these enclosures had been, that the fee-simple of the land had been doubled. In these eighteen parishes the annual value of property had increased no less than 53,508*l.*, and supported an increase of population to the extent of 5,682. He was sure that, in stating this case, he should be excused in doing so from the fact of the county being a purely agricultural one, as well as from the circumstance that the people had made such advances in agricultural improvement—the people themselves believing that it was owing very much to these protective duties that they had been able to make such advances in improvement. At all events, they were perfectly able to show that prosperity and protection had gone alongside, and hand in hand, with one another. The prayer of these petitioners was universally the same—namely, that their Lordships would be pleased to reject the measures which were now in progress in the other House of Parliament; and to continue to them that protection which they now possessed. Their Lordships would, no doubt, do as they had always done—namely, take into consideration the measure itself with a view to the great interests of the Empire, and with a view to the interests and well-being of the people at large. Their Lordships, he felt confident, would not allow themselves to be influenced in any way by the fears or opinions of any individuals elsewhere, but would proceed to the consideration of the measure with a view to acquit themselves in a manner the most conformable to the interests of the people at large. The measure to which he referred was a measure of a most extensive nature—a measure wholly new, and which would require the deepest attention as regarded its ultimate results upon the finances of the country. At all times—he confessed it was so with himself at least—when measures had been presented to their Lordships by the Government of the country, they carried such a degree of weight with them that their Lordships had always taken that into consideration as a most important element in the case; but for himself—and he could only speak his own opinion on this point—the measure now introduced by the present Government would not sway his mind in reference to its introduction in any way whatever. He perfectly understood, and he perfectly knew, the principle upon which the Government had been dissolved; but he had never heard it yet stated upon what principle the Government had been reunited and formed

again for the purpose of governing this country; and until he clearly knew and understood the point on which the Government was formed, the measure would never carry with him—and he thought he might say the same of their Lordships, that great weight which the recommendation of Government would otherwise carry with it. He hoped he was not out of order in speaking of the representatives of the people in the other House, who, he considered, must have lost much of the good opinion and confidence of the country by the course which they had pursued. [*A laugh.*] He knew perfectly well that it might give great pleasure to his noble Friends opposite to see their friends in the other House take that course, just as he knew it often gave pleasure to a certain class of gentlemen when a comrade attained a great object which he had in view, but which did not tend to increase their confidence in him. The noble Lords opposite might be pleased, but they would have no more confidence in the Government than they (the protectionists) had. Coming as the measure did to that House from the other under circumstances so peculiar, and so well known, that he would not allude to them further, he was sure it would be considered by their Lordships in reference to all the points to which he had alluded. Conceiving that to be the case, and believing that that House had always been a great, if not the greatest protector, at least they had always had much to do with the advancement of the liberties of the people of this country—believing and knowing that, at no period of the history of the country, had the liberties of the people been invaded without that House being, at the same time, trampled under foot—looking to the state and condition of the Government, and the state and condition of the other House of Parliament—he had not the slightest doubt that the result of their Lordships' deliberations would be to view the prayer of the petitioners as just in itself, and to reject the measure when it came to them from the other House.

Lord KINNAIRD said, he quite agreed with the noble Earl, that it would be more desirable if the proposal as to the Corn Laws were in the hands of those who had been consistent advocates of the repeal of all duties on corn. He should also be glad to know (for they had heard no explanation of the matter in that House) how the Government came to resume their seats after they had resigned them. The noble Earl and the noble Duke on the cross benches were in favour of an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. [The Earl of Hardwicke: Not I.] Well, then, it was for the noble Duke alone to consider whether, if the repeal was to take place, it would not be best that it should be immediate. He conceived it would be very much for the advantage of the farmers that the question should be finally set at rest at once, for if a postponement took place for three years, fears were entertained that improvements in agriculture would be retarded, and that a large quantity of wheat would be reserved for importation at the end of that period. Not a murrain in cattle, or any other visitation could take place, but the loss would be attributed to the approaching danger, of protection being withdrawn; and landlords would be exposed to the threat of farmers giving up their farms. Whereas if the duty was at once taken off, prices would not fall; and it would be impossible without overwhelming loss for any man at once to give up his farm without selling off his stock, and thereby being greatly out of pocket. He knew the alarm which the Anti-Corn-Law League gave some noble Lords. He could take upon himself to say, that if the repeal was immediate and total, the League would be dissolved; whereas, if the law continued for three years, the creation of votes (admitted by high authority to be perfectly legal) would go on, and the bad feeling, now so much to be deplored, would continue. From what the noble Duke said the other evening, he must be surprised at the late division. He did not see how the protectionists could reduce that majority, even if an appeal were made to the country, and he recommended them to accept the measure, which could not be amended by their Lordships, but must be thrown out if they were at all opposed to it.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY said, that when the measure came up to their Lordships' House, the proper time for this discussion would arrive. He deprecated making speeches on the subject when the House was entirely ignorant in what shape the measure was to come before them, and trusted that the noble Duke (Duke of Richmond) would not be led into a discussion by what had fallen from the noble Lord.

The Marquess of SALISBURY was understood to deprecate discussion. The noble Marquess, who spoke from the cross benches, was quite inaudible.

The Duke of RICHMOND said, the

noble Lord (Lord Kinnaird) who had just spoken, had been giving the protectionists some advice. Now, he was sure that the protectionists would take this very kind of the noble Lord. His noble Friend (the Marquess of Londonderry) had also given him advice; and as he had made it an invariable rule rather to follow the advice given by a friend than by an opponent, he would take the advice of the noble Marquess, and not enter into any discussion of the question which was at present under consideration in the House of Commons. The noble Lord had alluded to the large majority in the other House in favour of the Government measure. Now he (the Duke of Richmond) was not surprised that the measure was carried by so large a majority. That majority, as their Lordships were aware, was 97; of course all the placemen voted—and then there were a great many offices vacant, and there were doubtless a great many persons looking after those vacant offices. Under those circumstances he was rather surprised that the majority was so small. But the noble Lord asked what was the use of appealing to the country upon this question? Now, he (the Duke of Richmond) would tell the noble Lord what would be the use of appealing to the country. It was to turn out of Parliament every one of the ninety-seven deserters—in fact, the whole of the 110 who followed Sir Robert Peel—men, who, if they had been in the army in India, would have abandoned their colours, as they had here run away from their principles. Those men came and swamped the honest opinion of the House of Commons. He could say for one, if it was for no other reason that he wished to go to the county; it would be that those Gentlemen should be shown that the people of England liked honesty—that they did not like men who came into power pledging themselves to oppose certain measures and support others upon the hustings; but who, when they came to Parliament, violated every pledge and promise which they had made. The noble Lord said, that the farmers were continually grumbling; now he thought the farmers had been very wrong in not having grumbled sooner and more frequently; but there was no wonder that they grumbled after the scandalous manner in which they had been treated in the House of Commons by those whom they had sent there, upon the strength of the pledges made upon the hustings. They must not now allude to speeches which had been made since 1841. But some of the speeches which were made in 1839, before the Whigs were driven from office, were very instructive, showing, as they did, what men would say and do when they were desirous to come into power, and how sudden the change frequently was, after their object was attained. He would not believe that the measure of the Government would pass their Lordships' House until he saw it pass. The noble Lord had talked about the consistency of the advocates of free trade; now he (the Duke of Richmond) believed there were very few of that class. It was true the noble Lord had been an advocate for free trade for the last half-dozen years; but he was not so during Earl Grey's Government, when a vote was taken in their Lordships' House—[Lord KINNAIRD: Yes, I was]—at least, if he was, he did not vote for it. Did not the noble Earl (Earl Ripon) oppose Earl Fitzwilliam's Motion upon that occasion? and did not his noble and learned Friend, who had declared himself a free trader, sit on the Woolsack and hear the Motion made without saying a word upon the subject? Then, again, had not the Government of Lord Melbourne proposed a protective fixed duty of 8*s.*? He (the Duke of Richmond) must admit that those who supported the proposition were not guilty of so great an inconsistency in supporting the present measure of the Government as were the Government themselves in proposing it; for the former had not gone to the hustings and told the people of England that they were in favour of protection, and thereby procured themselves a large majority; and when they got in, turned round upon those who had supported them, and not only abandoned the principles they were pledged to support, but actually headed the attack against them. These were charges which he made against the Government. He was not, he again repeated, surprised at the majority in the House of Commons; but he should be very much surprised if their Lordships did not at once place the Government in such a position as would compel them to go to the country; and, if they did so, they would find that protection had a large number of friends: he might appeal to the recent election for a confirmation of his statement. See how well Nottinghamshire had done its duty: it had returned two protectionists. He might also refer to Dorsetshire, and many other places, where similar results had been obtained; in fact, he believed all the elections which

had taken place since Sir R. Peel had propounded the measure of the Government, with the exception of one place in the north, and the city of Westminster (where they took a Radical in preference to one who had deserted the ranks of protection), had all gone in favour of protection. He therefore looked with the greatest confidence to the result of an appeal to the people.

The EARL of WICKLOW could not join with those who expressed regret that this measure had not been brought forward by the party opposite. Up to the present time, both parties in this country had avowed themselves protectionists. Lord Melbourne, when asked in that House whether the fixed duty proposed by his Government was for revenue or protection, distinctly and immediately answered, for protection. But now a total change had come over the minds of men, which, however, did not qualify one set of men to bring forward this measure rather than the other. It had been stated that the Anti-Corn-Law-League was an unconstitutional body. He was bound to state that that was not his opinion; he thought it was established for a perfectly constitutional purpose, and, though not a member of that body, and not wishing to belong to it, he thought it ought to be congratulated by its friends on the extraordinary success which in so short a time had attended its exertions.

LORD BROUGHAM should have said nothing on this occasion; but after what had fallen from the noble Duke he must state that the question of protection was not an open question in Earl Grey's Government. [Earl GREY said he had always been in favour of free trade.] Yes, but then it was as Under Secretary that the noble Earl held those opinions; but, however useful an Under Secretary might be, he is not the Government, and his opinions do not commit the Government to which he belongs. As to the League, he (Lord Brougham) had never said, as had been supposed from something that had fallen from him at the beginning of the Session, that it was an unconstitutional body. He knew it was a legal and constitutional body, founded for a perfectly constitutional object—namely, to teach, or, as they chose to call it, to agitate the people to effect a change by Parliamentary means in the policy of this country in a certain respect. What he had said was, that it was unconstitutional, though it was legal—barely legal—to collect funds for the purpose of purchasing the franchise. The League, however, declared that they did not do that. They said they only encouraged people to buy votes; but, perhaps, they encouraged them in that sort of way that consisted in paying part of the cost; and when he saw this fund of a quarter of a million collected, he must say he thought it not unlikely that something of the kind might be the case.

LORD REDESDALE wished to explain, that in what had fallen from him on another occasion respecting the creation of faggot voters in Huntingdonshire, at a time when Lord John Russell was a candidate for the representation, he found he had not been correct in connecting such creation with the Duke of Bedford, who had no concern whatever in the matter.

Petitions to lie on the Table.

PENAL COLONIES—VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE then said, he rose in pursuance of notice to call their Lordships' attention to a petition of considerable importance, both as regarded the quarter from which it emanated, and the subject to which it referred. It was a petition very numerously signed by the inhabitants of a Colony well known to most of their Lordships—the Colony of Van Diemen's Land. It was a most attractive and interesting Colony, and hitherto had been a very thriving one. The persons, however, who had emigrated thither stated in the petition which he was about to present, that they had been encouraged to emigrate to that country in the hope and expectation that no greater number of convicts would be sent to that part of Her Majesty's dominions than might be expected to be useful in the Colony, and would be absorbed in the virtuous and free population; but that latterly they had been subjected to such an increase of the importation of convicts as they thought would prove most vicious to the society of the Colony. The petitioners further stated that they had embarked large amounts of capital in the Colony, and that, for a long time, nothing could be more thriving or prosperous than the state of the Colony had been under their control. The petitioners stated, that from the year 1834 to 1840 the population of the Colony had increased from 12,000 to 40,000; the number of acres under cultivation from 25,000 to 124,000; the shipping from 142 tons to 141 vessels; the imports from 62,000*l.* to 988,000*l.*; and the ex-

ports had increased to an equal extent; but that this rapid progress—this great prosperity, had been arrested by the Colony having been made the receptacle for the whole convict population of these countries. No less than 16,000 convicts had been introduced into the Colony in four years; and the consequence of this enormous import of criminals was, that it was impossible to carry out any perfect system of classification or discipline, but they were distributed about the country in groups of three or four hundred, endangering the safety and inspiring terror in the minds of the colonists. The petitioners further stated that crime had increased in proportion to the large number of criminals so introduced, and that a consequent necessity had arisen for maintaining a very large police force. Under these circumstances, notwithstanding the immense natural advantages of the Colony, the number of free settlers was rapidly diminishing, and in the course of the last year—that was, down to the last seven or eight months—700 free settlers only had come into the colony, while 2,000 had gone out, thus occasioning a diminution in the free population in one year to the extent of about 1,300. The persons who had signed this petition were most respectable, and it was brought forward under the countenance of the Bishop of the Colony and the great majority of the Members of the Legislative Assembly; and he submitted, that inasmuch as it expressed the sentiments of some 1,300 or 1,400 of the principal landowners of the place, it was entitled to the consideration of the Government. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) would offer no opinion, on the present occasion, upon the general question of secondary punishments; but, looking at the state of our criminal law, and the prevalence of crime in this country, it might be proposed that this description of punishment should be continued; but he had, nevertheless, indulged himself in the hope that it might have been so conducted that a certain number of convicts, proportionate to the free population, might be introduced into our Colonies under such regulations as should make the system conducive not only to the carrying the law into effect, but conducive at the same time to the advantage of the colonists, and that which should be the great and ultimate object of such punishment — the reformation, the improvement, and the well-being of the convicts themselves. The only hope of success, however, depended upon the number of convicts bearing not too large a proportion to the number of the free population of the Colony; and if the system was to be persevered in, the Legislature must make up their minds as to the character of the Colony which was made the place of punishment—whether it was to be regarded as a penal Colony, and used for the purpose of punishing criminals only, or whether, while receiving convicts, it was still to be a free Colony—free for its own advancement and improvement, and deluged only with that number of criminals which, by proper management, might be gradually absorbed into the honest and industrious population. This Colony of Van Diemen's Land was entitled, by the conduct of its free inhabitants, its fertility, and other great natural advantages, to be regarded not as a penal Colony only, but as one in which the interests of the free settlers should be respected and cared for by the mother country. He was aware that there were great difficulties in the way of the application of a remedy; but he was convinced that no measure would meet the evil which did not relieve, to a large extent, the Colony from that amount of criminality which was now, day by day, being introduced into it. The petitioners prayed that no convicts might be sent to the Colony; but while this was their opinion, there were others who did not object to the introduction of a limited number, though they felt that the importation of criminals to its present amount could only end in the destruction of all order, prosperity and happiness in the Colony. The effect of the system, as now carried on, had been to interfere materially with free labour. There were 2,000 free labourers, or reclaimed convicts, having tickets of leave, who were now going about searching in vain for employment; the convict labour absorbing the whole demand. The consequence was, that the convict was in a better position than the free labourer or the reformed criminal, whom we were bound to encourage. He hoped the subject would receive the attention due to it from the right hon. Gentleman who now held the office of Secretary for the Colonies.

Lord STANLEY said, his noble Friend (Lord Lyttelton) who sat near him, had so recently entered on the administration of colonial affairs, and he (Lord Stanley) had been so intimately acquainted with them as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and this question particularly had occasioned him so much anxiety in that capa-

city, that he trusted he might be forgiven by their Lordships, and also by his noble Friend, if he (Lord Stanley) interposed some observations between the House and any he (Lord Lyttelton) might have to make on the part of the Government. He (Lord Stanley) begged their Lordships to understand that this petition involved questions infinitely more important than even the welfare of a single Colony; for it involved the decision of a no less vital question than that of the whole of our system of secondary punishment. He thought that to a certain extent the allegations in the petition were exaggerated with regard to the evils resulting from the present state of things; yet he was far from denying that in the course of the last four or five years there had been inflicted on Van Diemen's Land a considerable amount both of financial and social evil by the necessity that existed of confining the whole transportation of convicts to this Colony. Though the petitioners said they had mainly, if not entirely, contributed to the extraordinary growth and prosperity of this Colony, yet it was a fact that it was to the convicts that the prosperity of the settler was owing; for it should be recollected that the conditions on which the free settlers obtained grants of land there were, that they should be bound to receive and maintain, at their cost, a certain proportion of convicts. In point of fact it so occurred, that that which was at first imposed on these free settlers as an obligation, was speedily felt to be a boon. The free settlers soon began to write to the Government for convict labour; and it was to the consequent expenditure on the part of the Government, mainly, if not exclusively, that the free settlers owed their prosperity. He (Lord Stanley) was far from denying the great importance of preserving something like a proportion between the supply of convicts and the number of free settlers. He would beg their Lordships' attention to the position in which the Government was placed at the period in which they came into office. Up to 1840, the system of transportation was such, that every convict going to the Colonies, was handed over to some free settler, who undertook to maintain him, and who had the advantage of his services; and who, in point of fact, exercised over him almost the same authority that a master would over a slave. The assignment system, as it was called, continued till 1840. He (Lord Stanley) was far from saying, that that system was not open to serious objections; but it had its merits, and he thought was too hastily abandoned. For so long as you could place a limited number of convicts in the society of a free settler and his family, they were removed from the temptations to crime, and they were educated, by virtuous persons, who had a sort of parental care over them. No system could tend more to promote the great object of punishment, namely, the reformation of the guilty. But he could not conceal this from himself, that the system of assignment was open to this heavy and grievous objection, that there was no certainty as to the amount of punishment inflicted. It varied with the character of the person to whom the convict was assigned, and also with the physical qualities and capabilities of the convict himself. Many a master passed over the faults of a vicious but useful, because skilful servant; while on the other hand the slightest shortcomings were severely visited when the qualifications and capabilities of the convict were not such as to make his services of much value to his master. Many, indeed, of the latter class were sent back by the persons to whom they were assigned, with a stigma thus wrongly fixed on their characters. But the evil went further. It was known that persons were sometimes transported from this country, that their friends followed them, purchased property in Van-Diemen's Land, and then obtained that the convict husband or son should be handed over to them as servants. This was no punishment. But with a harsh master the case was different, and the condition of the assigned not unfrequently became one of cruel slavery. The system was put an end to in 1840. Up to that time persons transported were sent partly to New South Wales, partly to Van Diemen's Land; but in that year the then existing Government decided not only to put a stop to the assignment system, but that no convicts should in future be sent to New South Wales. The Colonies of South and Western Australia had obtained in their charters security against being made places of penal settlement. But, as he had stated in 1840, the then Government decided that the resources of the almost boundless Colony of New South Wales should be lost as a penal settlement; and, from that time, Van Diemen's Land had been the sole place to which convicts could be transported. This was

the situation in which, on their accession to office in 1841, they found themselves. The disposition of the convicts in gangs, he might here remark, was not arranged merely because of their numbers. It was the fundamental system upon which the plan of transportation has been remodelled, the assignment system being in fact abolished in order to place the convicts in gangs, employing them upon hard but uniform labour. In 1841, the present Government came into office, and had to grapple with the question, loaded with these restrictions. But was that all? No: for the House of Commons in that same year passed a resolution condemning the hulk system, and requiring, in all transportation cases, that the sentence should be rigidly and literally carried out. Under these circumstances—assignments prohibited, gangs established, the field of penal settlement narrowed, the House of Commons pressing for the rigid carrying out of every sentence of transportation—he did not deny that Van Diemen's Land had received some injury, or that it had grounds for demanding relief at the hands of the Government. There was no subject to which his attention was more earnestly directed than to find a means of remedying these inconveniences, which he then foresaw, and which were now under discussion. But their Lordships would agree with him, that it was not easy to establish a new system of convict discipline, when all the arrangements had to be carried into effect by two parties so distant from each other as to require that a year should elapse before the replies to each other's letters could be received. It fortunately happened, although his (Lord Stanley's) attention had been directed to the subject earlier, that towards the close of 1842, one of the ablest of the colonial servants in the employ of the Government, Mr. Montagu, came to England at the same time that the Attorney General for New South Wales happened to be in this country. Several consultations were held with these gentlemen, and also with his right hon. Friend at the head of the Home Department; and the result was the formation of a system of convict discipline, which their Lordships would find recommended and explained in Papers laid on the Table of the House in 1843. It was decided, in accordance with the provisions introduced by the noble Lord who preceded him (Lord Stanley) in the Colonial Office, that in all cases convicts should be divided into penal gangs, called probation gangs, to be distributed into the unsettled parts of the country; and that they should be removed from thence in periods proportioned to the periods of their original sentence, but varying also according to their conduct in that state; and having passed through a variety of stages of less and less severity, at last get, by ticket of leave, into the state of conditional or ultimate free pardon. Though it reflected no credit on this great country, it was a fact, that till within the last four or five years, though we had been sending 3,000 or 4,000 convicts annually to that Colony, yet there had been no provision whatever made for the religious or spiritual superintendence of those convicts. One of the first steps which Her Majesty's Government took in this direction was, to arrange the convicts into gangs of 200 or 300, according to their respective religious persuasions, and appoint chaplains to instruct them, with the consent of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bishops of the Colony. He had reason to believe that, in a moral point of view, that plan had been productive of the most beneficial results. The general conduct of the convicts under the improved system of discipline was most satisfactory; and if the scheme had failed in any respect, it had failed in this: that the large increase in the number of persons sentenced to transportation took place previously, at the period of the great and growing embarrassment of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, in consequence of which there was great want of employment. He admitted that this was a great and grievous evil. Her Majesty's Government had taken steps to alleviate that evil; they had taken on themselves a much larger amount of the police expenses. They had also taken another step, which would require some explanation. Their Lordships were aware, that in the Australian Colonies there was a minimum price fixed on land, for the purpose of preventing a large accumulation of that kind of property by small capitalists, who would not be able to cultivate it. But when the amount of labour was superfluous, this plan was reversed. Then it would be found more desirable to facilitate the acquisition of land, in order that more labourers might be employed upon it. With that view he obtained their Lordships' consent to an Act for the repeal of the Land Sales Act, so far as they related to Van Diemen's Land. That, indeed, had been made a matter of com-

plaint, and under this law all sales of land became the property of the Colony; but, partly from the embarrassments of the Colony and the influx of convicts, the sales had so fallen off, that no revenue was provided from that source. Her Majesty's Government thought it advisable in the first place to give instructions that the convicts employed in clearing the unsettled parts of the country should be also employed in raising the food necessary for their subsistence. They were also employed in the improvement of the land. But before the repeal of the Land Sales Act, it was necessary that the improved land should be sold by auction, and the proceeds thereof paid into the Financial Treasury of the Colony. The Government thought that while they took on themselves a large proportion of the burdens of the police and other establishments, and the expense of maintaining convicts, they should also assume the control over the finances. This course enabled the Government to assign improved land to those convicts who were unable to find employment, which land they might cultivate on their own account, and of course that would be a premium on their good conduct. While he admitted that the introduction of a very large number of convicts into Van Diemen's Land had been productive of some social evils; yet when the petitioners spoke of so large a body of convicts being admitted into so small a Colony, it should be remembered that the territory of that Colony was not less in extent than that of Ireland, while it was occupied by not more than 40,000 free settlers. To speak of a Colony as extensive as Ireland being swamped by the introduction of 4,000 convicts annually—provided those convicts had proper superintendence and control over them, and the means of providing for themselves at the expiration of their sentence—was merely adding another difficulty to those which arose from the present state of our convict population. But if this system were not permitted, what were you to do with the sweepings of our gaols? We now send abroad annually 4,000 or 5,000 male convicts, and there were now in our penal Colonies not less than 50,000 convicts, from the pollution of whose presence this country had been relieved. Was it not an advantage to have this country permanently relieved from such persons? But independently of pecuniary considerations, was not the system, in a moral point of view, better for the parties themselves? Did you believe that at the expiration of their sentence, men going out of prison stigmatized as felons by having been sentenced to what was equivalent to transportation, would have the remotest chance in this over-peopled country of obtaining employment? Would they have a chance of recovering their character? Would they not, when turned out of gaol, be driven by sheer necessity to seek the company of their former associates? Would they not recur with tenfold activity to their former wicked habits? On the contrary, by sending those men to Van-Diemen's Land, it gave the free population an incentive to excel them in moral conduct, while their example would in turn improve the character of the convict population, particularly in a country where the climate was good, the means of subsistence were ample, and there was plenty of room for employment. He thought that few people would advocate a material diminution in the amount of convicts sentenced to transportation. If, then, they were not to send out convicts to Van Diemen's Land, and shut out the other Colonies, he would ask, in what manner they proposed to dispose of those convicts? It was very easy to say "we will establish a new penal Colony;" but it was exceedingly difficult to carry such intention into effect. Many things were required to establish a proper penal settlement. In the first place, security was required—a position not too close to a tropical climate; a country not inhabited, and a fertile soil; all those requirements it would be exceedingly difficult to obtain, and even if found, in his opinion it would not be suitable for the purpose. For in his judgment, the notion of sending convicts to a purely penal Colony would be fatal to the system of penal punishment; for at the expiration of the term of transportation, what would become of them? They must establish, in that case, a Colony which must never be refreshed by the presence of an unconvicted man. Let a distant land be taken for the purpose of security, and let it be converted into a large prison; and, passing by the obvious evils of such a state of things, when the convicts were released from confinement, what would or what could become of them? Constituted as such a settlement would be without a free population amid which they could gradually absorb themselves, what could become of them? He would take the case of Norfolk Island alone, and appeal to his noble Friend on the cross benches (the Duke of Rich-

mond), who knew the strong feeling in the Colonies, and knew the difficulties which existed in providing, even upon the smallest scale, for the convicts who were sent from Parkhurst and Pentonville, and who had gone out under no restriction except that they were not to return again to their native country. The Government had acted as it had done, because they considered that beneficial effects arose from the mixed community of a free and convict population. They considered that great advantages would accrue to the convict, because he was gradually led from a state in which he suffered the severest penalties, and introduced into the society of a free population, under the surveillance of the magistrates and police, and thus enabled to return to honest habits while he was under certain control, which prevented him from feeling the consequences of a too sudden transition from ignominious punishment to total freedom. It would be, in his opinion, inexpedient to comply with the prayer of the memorialists, for the reasons he had stated, and because such compliance could not be made without an alteration in the entire penal system. He would compare our system of penal discipline with that maintained in a neighbouring country; and he believed that there was nothing which had led to so much general complaint in France as the return of 8,000 convicts, who it was apprehended would contaminate society, and be productive of much social evil. If then the return of 8,000 convicts was to be so much dreaded in a country of such large extent as France, how much greater would be the evil, and how much more serious apprehensions were to be entertained from pouring back upon an overburdened population like this, a body of 50,000 convicts? Her Majesty's Government were convinced that the present system was productive of many advantages to the convicts, because they were gradually absorbed among the free population in the neighbouring Colonies, and at the expiration of their terms of imprisonment, from the contiguity of those places, and the ready means of access, were enabled to suit their labour to whatever demand might exist for that labour in other Colonies. Her Majesty's Government had recently formed a new Colony in the north of New South Wales, under regulations which would enable the convicts to migrate to other parts of that country when there might be a demand for their labour. It was intended that a number of those convicts who had reached the most advanced, that was, the lightest stage of penal discipline, should go to that Colony, where they would be furnished with provisions for a limited period, and also a portion of land. They would also be permitted, if they thought proper, after a certain interval, to emigrate to the adjoining Colonies, and become the servants of the outlying population of those Colonies. The class of convicts who would be sent to this new Colony (Port Essington) would be those who, when they arrived there, would be in the position of having received a conditional pardon. He assured their Lordships that no subject had been more anxiously considered by the Members of Her Majesty's Government and himself, than the present question. They had taken every step within their power to relieve the financial difficulties of the Colonies, and to improve the social and moral system of the convicts, a great part of the moral effect of which depended upon their admixture with a free population, and the contiguity to some other country in which the labour of the liberated convicts might be made available. He would be slow to speak in other but respectful terms of the motives which had actuated the petitioners; but he could not help saying, that their financial embarrassments at the present moment had led them to attribute much of what they had complained of to the presence of convicts among them, when in fact they were owing to other causes. The petitioners had alleged that property had been deteriorated in value to the extent of one-half in consequence of the Colony being a penal settlement; but were noble Lords aware that in New South Wales it was stated that property had been depreciated in value two-thirds by the loss of convict labour? Thus it appeared that there were two arguments adduced—one against the admission of convicts, and another in their favour. The real cause of the depreciation of property could be traced to the fact that both Colonies shared in a portentous, unhealthy, and insane system of speculation —that after a short time public credit began to be shaken, and money had to be raised to meet engagements, at an enormous sacrifice. This of course caused a disorganization in commercial matters; and to that cause, and not to either the presence or absence of convicts, was to be traced the distress that had prevailed, and which had been instanced as an argument in favour of the prayer of the memorialists. He was glad to say that New South Wales

was recovering from the depression thus produced; and he hoped that it would not be long before Van Diemen's Land would also recover from its effects. The noble Lord opposite (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had stated that 700 persons had been obliged to emigrate from Van Diemen's Land. [The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: A much larger number; say 1,400 within six months.] He (Lord Stanley) would admit that 1,400 persons had emigrated, or as many more as the noble Marquess wished; but it should be borne in mind that a great increase of capital had taken place in South Australia, and that there had consequently been a proportionate demand for labour, which accounted for the emigration, which was to be attributed to the desire to obtain a higher rate of remuneration in another and more prosperous Colony. He thanked their Lordships for the kindness with which they had heard him; and he entreated the House to consider well before it made a serious change, and that before it altered that system, and condemned the existing system, it would well calculate and consider what system it was prepared to substitute. He begged of the House not to condemn, but to amend what they might deem deficient—not to destroy one system, until they had found another which would not only be equally advantageous for Van Diemen's Land, but be a system which would also relieve this country from the immense mass of contamination which the pouring back of a large number of convicts would inevitably occasion, and one which would be equally successful in giving to those convicts a chance of being reformed by discipline, and ultimately of entering upon an honest course of life in a country which could afford them a fair return for their labour.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that as his noble Friend had appealed to him to say, whether he was not aware of the difficulty found in providing employment for persons sent to the Colonies from Pentonville prison, he would trouble their Lordships with a few words. He was no longer a Commissioner of Pentonville prison; but while he was, he made it his duty to inquire into the subject; and he knew that when men went abroad with a good character from that prison, they were received by the people with derision, and could hardly get any employment at all. There were prejudices against them, which, however, were now wearing away, and he hoped that the Colonists would now find them good and efficient servants. Cordially agreeing with all that his noble Friend (Lord Stanley) had stated, he should not have risen but for the purpose of mentioning these facts.

LORD LYTTELTON, who was very inaudible in the gallery, said, that nothing more was left to him to do than state to their Lordships the course that had been pursued since the noble Lord had quitted the Colonial Department. It was proper that he should state, in the first place, to the noble Lord opposite, who seemed to have misunderstood some of the points under consideration, that the first of the printed Papers laid on the Table of the House, which was a despatch from Sir Eardley Wilmot, the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, had been adopted by his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary as the basis of the proposed change about to be carried into effect. The subject naturally divided itself into two parts. The first was the moral and social state of the convicts at Van Diemen's Land. The second was the financial and economical considerations affecting the whole system as regarded the convicts. With respect to the moral and social part of this question, he (Lord Lyttelton) was not prepared to adopt the view taken by the noble Lord, that the probation system had proved beneficial. He was, however, not prepared to maintain a contrary opinion. The despatches on the Table asserted the system to be beneficial, and in so far the Government was prepared to adopt it. So far, indeed, as they could come to any conclusion from Sir E. Wilmot's despatches, the probation system must be held to be a good one. The returns from the different gaols for the preceding and former years threw very little light upon the conduct of the convicts. He found that in a given number of passholders, who had been released from the probation gangs, and had sought other employment, there was manifested a slight improvement. Of the number of passholders thus removed, there was a proportion of fifty-four per cent who were shown to have committed no social or moral offence. He quite admitted that the information possessed on these topics was very scanty, and that much fuller knowledge was required respecting the moral and social condition of the convict classes of Van Diemen's Land. The Government had, however, directed this information to be collected and sent home, and when received it should be laid before their Lord-

ships. With respect to the general complaints of the petitions with regard to the great influx of convicts into Van Diemen's Land, he was prepared to state that the Government entertained a belief that some of the allegations could not be denied. It was, however, certain, that if the Despatches and Papers, laid on the Table of the House were examined, it would be found—and the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) had not noticed the fact—that in regard to financial, economical and general moral results, very many of the grounds of complaint urged in the petition would be found to have been removed. He was prepared to state, with respect to the general allegation as to the hardship of selecting from amongst the whole of the Australian possessions one single spot, in order to concentrate upon it the convict population of the Empire, that this complaint had deeply impressed the Government by its justice, and had created a very strong anxiety to provide a remedy. He was enabled to state that the Government was prepared to depart from the rigid practice inferred by the noble Lord, and also to hold out a hope that the system adopted during the last few years of confining the transportation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island alone, would be relaxed. The Government entertained the strongest feelings upon this subject, and, without going into details, he would say his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was about to see whether an attempt to abandon the system referred to might not be made with safety, and even with advantage, to the Colony. Their Lordships might have seen from the Papers before referred to, that application had been made from the other settlements in Australia, to receive from Van Diemen's Land a number of those convicts who had become passholders, who were nevertheless in a state of punishment. The demand for labour in New South Wales was so great as to have induced Sir G. Gipps, the Governor there, to apply for leave to transfer passholders from Van Diemen's Land thither; and under these circumstances it was, that the change of system was under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. He begged to apologize to their Lordships for the vagueness and generalisms to which he was necessarily confined in dealing with the important subject before them. He could only assure them that the whole question was under the anxious consideration of his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary; and if, during the course of the Session, any new facts should transpire, or any decided steps should be taken, their Lordships might depend upon being made acquainted with them in due course.

EARL GREY entirely concurred in some of the observations which had fallen from the noble Lord who had just sat down, and augured much good from the course upon which the Government had entered; but he could not at the same time declare himself satisfied with the statements made by the noble Lord as to the views entertained by Her Majesty's Ministers upon the important subject under consideration. The noble Lord had not denied the statements in the petition presented by his noble Friend. The case of those petitioners was deserving of the serious consideration of that House. The noble Lord held out a hope that relief might be expected by them, in so far as the burdens imposed upon Van Diemen's Land by the present system of transportation were concerned. That, however, he was disposed to regard as the smallest part of the grievance of which they complained. He considered that part of their case which related to the effects of the system of transportation on colonial society to be the greatest and most important feature in it; and from that evil no relief, it appeared, was to be expected. From all that their Lordships had heard it was quite clear that great evils arose to colonial society from the system of transportation; and he did not think that to continue a system which inflicted those frightful evils could be called acting justly or fairly towards the Colonies. There was no doubt that the difficulties of the subject were very great; but if they continued to send convicts to Van Diemen's Land, they would find that those evils would daily be aggravated and become worse, because so long as they retained that system the proportion of convicts to free settlers would every hour become greater, and the chances of an improvement in the general state of society there would diminish. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) said the system could not be done away with. He (Earl Grey) was prepared to express his opinion that the system of transportation to a penal Colony, as at present in operation, could and ought to be done away with; and that was an opinion which he had long entertained. No answer had ever been made to the frightful picture of the evils of the present system of transportation

which had been drawn by the most reverend prelate the Archbishop of Dublin in a former Session. The Legislature and the Government of Great Britain had no right to create at the other end of the world such a society as was thus established by means of the transportation system. What were they to do if they continued the existing system? The plan of employing the convicts in gangs had been already objected to. The employment of gangs had been the result of giving up the principle of assignment. They had heard of the rejection of the system of assignment by the Government; and he would ask any man who had read the evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on that subject, to say if it were possible that the system of assignment could ever again be resorted to? He (Earl Grey) believed that it was possible for the Government to adopt a plan by which part of the system of transportation might be retained, and the evils which accompanied the existing system prevented. There were two objects to be effected under the present system by the transportation of a convict; namely, in the first place, the punishment of the convict while under charge of the Government; and after that period of punishment had expired, the relief of this country from the presence of the convict. Now he considered it a great mistake that, in our treatment of convicts, we did not sufficiently separate these objects; and he believed that a very great advantage might be obtained by their more perfect and entire separation. The penal labour to which the convict was sentenced ought to be undergone in this country, and the transportation might follow the labour. His noble Friend opposite had truly said that it was impossible to establish a good system of penal labour, where the persons whose business it was to superintend and regulate that labour, could not reply to a communication of the Government in less than twelve months from the time at which the communication had been forwarded. That was felt to be the case as regarded Van Diemen's Land; and those difficulties could not be avoided in a case where such a lengthened period must elapse before a reply could be obtained to a regulation of the Government at home, or a communication from the Colony to the Secretary of State. He (Earl Grey) believed that the system of penal labour ought to be proceeded with under the eyes of the Government, and the exile might commence at the period when that penal labour concluded, when the convicts had so far been trained to industrious and sober habits. It was true that there might be a reluctance on the part of the colonists to receive the convict at the end of his sentence of penal labour; but it was quite evident that it would be better to send such a man to a Colony after the expiration of his sentence of penal labour, than to remove him before that period of labour had commenced. He felt it his duty to make those observations while that subject was before their Lordships, and to call their attention to the importance of making every improvement possible in the present system: for it was most desirable that the faults which had hitherto existed in connexion with the system should be removed. He thought the present system of transportation had altogether failed in answering the purpose of a proper secondary punishment; and he should repeat it, that he did not think we had a right to inflict those serious evils which had been complained of in a distant quarter of the globe. It was objectionable on moral as well as other grounds, and those evils ought not to be allowed to continue.

The BISHOP of OXFORD said, he would trouble their Lordships with a very few remarks on this subject. He agreed generally with the noble Earl opposite, who had alluded to the effects of transportation, and had shown some of the great, and, as he believed, insuperable evils connected with the present system. But those statements did not make good the case of the noble Earl with reference to this petition; for the petition asked for peculiar redress for peculiar evils. Whereas he (the Bishop of Oxford) believed the evil to be a general evil inherent in our system of transportation; and they might lay down very good rules for the future conduct of that system, but that would not in any way afford relief to the Colony in its present necessities. In order to meet the prayer of the petitioners they must find some vent for the surplus convict population they had already consigned to Van Diemen's Land. As far as regarded some general alteration as needful, he concurred in the general principles stated by the noble Earl opposite. He considered that transportation, as it had been conducted in this country since the commencement of the present century, had been a great curse to the world, and a great reproach to this nation. He called upon noble Lords to

remember that when our first penal settlements were established we sent out vast bodies of convicts, with large detachments of soldiers to watch them, because we knew they were regardless of social obligations—that we sent out medical men to attend to their bodily necessities; but in our first scheme did not provide for so much as one religious instructor of any kind or class whatever to watch over their moral progress. Knowing, as we knew, or ought to have known, that evil was always a fermenting principle—knowing that to associate persons of vicious habits, increased instead of diminishing the evil—we were ready to consign convicts to a distant part of the earth with no moral supervision and instruction. After the long voyage which was necessary before those convicts could reach the penal settlement, during which every evil which characterized one man might be communicated to all the rest, they were to be set down in a strange country to found a new people, without having in themselves any one principle of moral regeneration or of spiritual healing. Of this character was the conduct which we pursued in founding the first penal Colonies; and we had reaped as we had sowed. The result of the course which we had adopted was now to be witnessed. It was impossible to hear or read of the state of things in the quarter of the world to which he referred, without shame and deep sorrow. They found that there, in common with the English name, had sprung up the most deep and horrible moral pollution—that vices which Christianity had almost banished from the earth were there flourishing in rankness and evil abundance—that the tone of society was altogether lowered—and that even those who were recovered in a great measure from the particular sins of their progenitors, exhibited in other respects no great moral improvement. They found a state of society in which chastity was rare among the women, and purity a stranger to the men. This had been the result of their present system of transportation; and how would this country be repaid for its policy? Most undoubtedly those who believed in a Moral Governor of the universe would admit that in some way or other such evils, if continued, would be visited in vengeance upon those by whom they were knowingly committed. It might be that they were nursing up in that remote part of the world a nation of future pirates, who would cramp and destroy the energies of their commerce—it might be that at their hands, through India, this country would be punished; for that punishment must come upon a nation which would seed the earth with iniquity, those who believed in the moral government of the world could not for an instant doubt. He for one, therefore, thanked the noble Lord who lately held office as Secretary for the Colonies (Lord Stanley) for the speech he had made that night, and for his statement that Her Majesty's then Government had seen the great importance of giving moral and religious instruction to the convicts who were sent out from this country. He rejoiced at the manner in which that announcement had been received by their Lordships. He was much gratified to hear many of the announcements of that noble Lord, who had made his statement with wonderful clearness. He could not, however, concur in all the plans which the noble Lord announced he had entertained an intention of bringing forward at the time he was at the head of the Colonial Office. He (the Bishop of Oxford) wished to call their Lordships' attention to one extraordinary principle asserted by the noble Lord—that the prevalence of vice among the convicts in the penal Colonies tended to raise the standard of virtue among the free population. This appeared to him the most monstrous paradox ever propounded. Were they to be told that crime would be prevented by presenting continually before the eyes of men vice—not in chains, in fetters, or in punishment, but prosperous and triumphant—by showing them vicious men acquiring large estates, and so far influencing the tone of society, that a man high in professional life did not dare, at a public dinner, to confess that he had not gone out as a convict, because he was ashamed that he could not in that respect claim a fellow feeling with those who were around him? To maintain that society constituted on such a footing as this, where vice was triumphant, could be reformed by that very fact, was, in his opinion, a position utterly untenable. He had always hitherto heard that the best means of preventing vice from extending was to keep it out of sight. He had hitherto thought that the best mode of preserving the purity of their own families was not to lead them to the haunts of vice and licentiousness, but to prevent them from witnessing such scenes, for that the mere knowledge of evil implied a certain measure of contamination. He could not for a moment entertain the opinion, that by exhibiting triumphant vice in their Colonies,

they were tending to improve the moral condition of the community. But the noble Lord had told them that his proposition for the relief of Van Diemen's Land was to found a new settlement, not strictly penal, in the northern part of Australia. They must remember that the convicts sent to such a settlement would receive rations from the Government, and that those who were unable to purchase land in order to establish themselves would obtain it gratuitously; and they would necessarily be placed in a much better position, and on a much better footing, than men of virtuous character in the districts in which they were located. He fully concurred in the opinion of the noble Earl opposite (Earl Grey), that our strictly penal discipline could be managed better, more safely, more cheaply, more certainly, at home; that at home we could better provide for the separation of criminals whom it might be deemed advisable to keep apart; that we should there have them more constantly under our eye, and should consequently be better able to adopt an efficient system of moral restraint. This, in his opinion, could be done much better at home than abroad. But then came the question—what was to be done with these men when they had become better fitted for social life? There, he thought, the system of transportation might rightly be resorted to. After the convicts had suffered their punishment at home, the object should be to give them an opportunity of recovering their character. That they could hardly do at home. He considered, therefore, that our penal Colonies ought to be receptacles for the men who, having suffered their punishment at home, went thither to gain new characters, and thus we might make them the pioneers of civilization. It seemed to him that this course had already been marked out by Providence. The first settlers in any land had to undergo privations which after-settlers were not compelled to encounter; and he thought they were justified in saying to men who had lost their character and had suffered the punishment of their crimes, "You shall incur those penalties which Providence and nature have imposed upon the first settlers in a new country, the risk of health, the suffering from bodily labour, and those other inconveniences of every kind which attend such enterprizes. You shall have an opportunity of regaining your character, but you shall establish the possibility of living for those free colonists who may hereafter be sent out to profit by your labour." He considered that it was most advisable to combine these two principles—to inflict the punishment, and seek to work the reformation at home, and then to give to the convicts an opportunity of establishing their characters in a new land. He considered that, by the adoption of such principles, transportation might be made a great blessing by removing from this country men who, though reformed, might, if they remained here, again lapse into crime—by establishing outlets for free labour in those Colonies, which might be rendered fit dwelling-places for civilized men—and by allowing them to temper the administration of their law with mercy, by not inflicting capital punishment upon those who could not again be let loose upon society in this country. So, by peopling the earth, not with the foulest specimens of humanity, but with those who, he hoped, would reproduce their race in something of its original greatness and nobleness, they might confess the faults of the past, and venture upon the experiment of the future. Conducted on such principles as these, he thought they might render the system of transportation worthy of this great country, and a blessing to the world in which they were placed.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE replied: He was aware that his noble Friend (Lord Stanley) had, in 1841, introduced a regulation excluding transportation from the whole of Australia, and concentrating it upon Van Diemen's Land. He believed the view then entertained by his noble Friend was, that though it might not be practicable altogether to do away with transportation, that mode of punishment might be considerably limited. He was extremely happy to have in support of his views the testimony and arguments of the right rev. Prelate who had with so much eloquence and force, and in a manner so becoming, adverted to those topics which had naturally attracted attention in the course of this debate. Perhaps the views which he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) entertained on this subject, were the same as those which had led to the experiment at Pentonville, which had been so successful. He hoped that, by an improved system of prison discipline, persons who had undergone preliminary punishment might be qualified for transportation afterwards, and might become comparatively useful members of society in new communities. He believed that, so far as the experiment had

been tried at Pentonville, the prisoners who had been sent out to our Colonies had been among the best, the most orderly, and the most promising settlers.

After a few words from Lord Lyttelton and the Bishop of Oxford in explanation,

Petition ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 3, 1846.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Villiers, from Inhabitants of Trowbridge and Dumfermline, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Robert Palmer, from various places, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Mr. Grogan, from Operative Paperstainers in the City of London, against Reducing the Duty on Paper.—By Mr. Hume, from Merchants, Traders, and Dealers in Tobacco, of the City of Norwich, for Reduction of Duty on Tobacco.—By Mr. Hume, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Arbroath, in favour of the Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By several hon. Members, from various places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten. By Mr. O'Connell, from Roman Catholic Clergy and Laity of Liverpool, against adopting Principles in Mr. Horner's Report respecting Factories.—By Mr. Lascelles, from Inhabitants of Wakefield, and by Mr. Villiers, from Bilston, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Viscount Ingestre, from Thomas Wood, Proprietor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle Newspaper, for Redress against Lichfield Free School.—By Captain Berkeley, from Merchant Seamen now in the Port of London, against Merchant Seamen's Fund Bill (1845).—By Mr. Barclay, from Inhabitants of Houghton-le-Spring and its Vicinity, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Sir John Rae Reid, from Inhabitants of Dover and its vicinity, for Reduction of Naval and Military Establishments.—By Mr. Solicitor General, from Members of the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the Cambridge Union, and by Mr. Robert Palmer, from Newbury, for Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Sir John M'Taggart, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Whithorn, for Alteration of the Prisons (Scotland) Act.—By Mr. Bankes, from Trustees and Managers of the Savings Bank established at Sherborne, for Alteration of Law respecting Savings' Banks.—By the Earl of March, from the Presbytery of Garioch, and the Kirk Session of Rayne, in favour of the Turnpike Roads (Scotland) Bill.

DAMAGE TO FOREIGN WHEAT IN BOND.

MR. VILLIERS, seeing the right hon. Baronet the Vice President of the Board of Trade in his place, would beg to ask him whether there was any account kept by the Customs or Board of Trade of the amount of damage done to foreign wheat detained in our warehouses, owing to the inability of the importers to pay the high duty? He was induced to put this question from a statement he had got of a circumstance which took place a few days ago at Gloucester. The statement was this:—

"This week a quantity of foreign wheat, which had been imported by Messrs. Phillpotts and Co. of this port (Gloucester), but which had since become damaged, so as not to be worth paying 17*s.* duty upon, was destroyed under the supervision of a very vigilant Custom-house officer, by throwing it into the river Severn, and by keeping a very close official watch till it was carried away by the stream, or so intermixed with the mud that it could not be in any way used. The wasteful official ceremony of total destruction is anything but calculated to impress the spectators of such a scene with the wisdom of the laws."

He was quite aware that a similar occurrence took place some years ago in the port of London, when a large quantity of wheat was destroyed, owing to the inability of the importers to pay the high rate of duty. Again, he would ask, could the right hon. Baronet state the amount of corn thus destroyed from time to time?

SIR G. CLERK said, that no return of that kind had been made by the Board of Customs to the Treasury or the Board of Trade; but he apprehended that there could be no difficulty in obtaining the information which the hon. Member required. He would make inquiries on the subject.

CORN LAWS—THE CHELTENHAM PETITION.

MR. NEWDEGATE rose to move—

"That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on the Petition from Cheltenham, that they do inquire into an alleged organized and extensive system of fraudulent and vexatious objections to the Votes of a great number of duly qualified Electors for the Northern Division of Warwickshire, the Northern Division of Staffordshire, and certain Divisions of other Counties."

In consequence of information he had that day received, he had altered the terms of the Motion of which he had given notice, so as to include North Staffordshire and other places, in order if possible, to meet the wishes of hon. Members opposite. He felt that he was identified with a party aggrieved, since he represented a constituency whose votes had been attacked, and many of whom had been put to great trouble and expense in defending their legitimate claims. But when he remembered that the hon. Member for Cheltenham, who was politically opposed to him in all respects, had complained of an organized association which had been formed for the purpose of preferring petitions to that House to which forged signatures were attached, he felt relieved from the difficulty which he might have experienced from a charge of being actuated by party feeling, however unjust, had he asked the House to refer these matters to a Select Committee of his own selection: he would now content himself with asking that it should be an instruction to the Committee to take into

consideration the case he was prepared to bring before the House. The petition was brought forward on a question of privilege; and he did not think, with the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, that the case of extensive and organized interference with the franchise was not a proper question for that tribunal to deal with. The right hon. Baronet, when there was a Motion before the House complaining of the interference of Peers in elections, induced the hon. Member for Athlone to withdraw it, because, as he said, the influence of Peers at elections was not more than they were entitled to as landlords and persons commanding the respect of their neighbours; but nothing had been said of removing from the Journals of the House the Standing Order on that point, which was annually moved in defence of the privileges of that House. Another consideration which weighed with him was, that it was ever the practice of the House to consider any fraudulent interference in elections as a breach of privilege; for how else could such cases be referred to the tribunals of the House constituted by privilege? When, therefore, he considered that the decisions of the registration courts were of as much importance as the elections themselves to those who claimed the franchise, he could not but think that, if the House extended its jurisdiction to the mode of conducting elections, they should extend it also to the conduct of the registration courts; for he had the authority of the right hon. Baronet himself for saying that the battle of any great political contest was to be fought in the registration courts. These were the grounds, independent of personal ones, which induced him to press the adoption of this instruction to the Committee. Having thus endeavoured to justify his taking this course, he should ask leave of the House to adduce facts by which he would show that it was on no light grounds or doubtful evidence that he made this motion. He had stated yesterday that objections had been served on a number of voters in North Warwickshire, all apparently signed by one person: the first batch of these was brought before the Coventry registration court, and except some eight or nine per cent signally failed. But the most remarkable case had occurred in the registration court at Birmingham. In two parishes objections were made to more than seven hundred voters, all signed by the same person who had signed the notices of objection at Coventry. He would lay before the House a short statement of the facts and proceedings, and evidence, which came before the registration court at Birmingham. An application had been made to the Postmaster General, on account of some notices of objections not having been delivered within the time prescribed by law in several instances; and the applicant was informed that such an enormous number of these objections were posted at Manchester—about 30,000 to different parts of the country—that the office was unable to clear them for several days. The court proceeded to consider these objections; and certain parties appeared on behalf of the Anti-Corn-Law League, of the names of Acland, Beswick, and Morris. The connexion of these persons with the Anti-Corn-Law League was admitted by them; so there could be no doubt of the agency of that body, nor of its having employed a person of bad character to sign the objections to voters for North Warwickshire, the real instrumentality being clearly traceable to the Anti-Corn-Law League. He (Mr. Newdegate) was prepared to prove that objections were served upon persons about whose legitimate claims there could be no doubt; persons possessed of property to a large amount; and that selection was evidently made of those who resided at the greatest distance from the northern division of the county, and to whom it would cause the greatest inconvenience and expense to appear in the Warwickshire registration courts to defend their votes. The person who was used as an instrument to sign these notices was a man of the name of Worthington, a person of no property—labouring for his daily subsistence, and who, on his being told that, owing to his conduct in the registration courts, he was liable to prosecution in a court of law, or at least to pay the expenses of every voter to whom he had vexatiously objected, replied, "They may try, but I am not worth 5*l.* in the world." After a certain number of the objections had failed, the agents of the Anti-Corn-Law League withdrew their "objector-general" stating that they would not pay the costs of any further objections; after which the numerous voters, who had been compelled to attend at great expense in defence of their votes, were left without even the remedy of the small costs allowed by law in cases of frivolous objection. He asked what was likely to be the effect upon the

representation of small constituencies, when 2,000 voters in a large constituency were objected to, and, when the system was discovered, the objections were withdrawn? He asked, if this system were pursued year after year, how could the franchise be maintained? Was each elector every year to be compelled to go through the ordeal of the registration courts? Was any voter, about whose claim there could be no doubt, after being brought up from Wales or the Isle of Wight, and finding the objection which had been lodged against him withdrawn—when he claimed a moderate compensation for the expense he had been put to by this vexatious opposition, to be left in the lurch by the disappearance of the objector? He would now proceed to explain why he asserted that these objections were fraudulent. He had evidence to prove that this objector-general, this keeper of a pop-shop (for such he was), this agent of the Anti-Corn-Law League, was grossly perjured before the registration court. An objection was placed before him, which was signed with his name; and he was asked by Mr. George Whateley, who appeared for the claimants, whether the signature was in his own handwriting? His answer was not ready, but being pressed, he replied that it was, and that he would swear it was. The revising barrister asked him if he wrote it with his own hand, and he answered yes. Mr. Whateley, in order that there might be no mistake, again asked him if he swore positively that it was in his hand; but the revising barrister interposed, and said he had already sworn it. Mr. Whateley said, he wished to be particular, for if he swore it again he was prepared to contradict him; and he again affirmed it. After he had so sworn, a man of the name of Stafford was produced by Mr. Wilmot, a legal adviser of voters, and he proved that the handwriting in which the name William Worthington was signed to this objection, and 400 or 500 more, was not that person's, but his (Stafford's). Confounded by the testimony of this witness, Worthington could not contradict it; and, on being asked if he told Stafford to imitate his hand, he replied that he did not tell him to write as like him as he could, or imitate his hand; but that he did lay one notice of objection before him, which he had signed, and told him to write like that, and be careful to sign nothing else. After such evidence given in court, there could be no doubt of the character of the objectors, or the notices of objections. The revising barrister said that he had sworn both ways, therefore he must have been perjured. The Anti-Corn-Law League agent, Morris, said that he had only corrected himself; but Stafford was not in court when Worthington swore the handwriting was his. The most extraordinary thing however was, that after this exposure, the revising barrister said he would, and in fact did, admit Worthington's evidence in other cases. Such a proceeding in any court was open to suspicion; and if the House was intrusted with the supervision of election matters, and the judge of a court which had cognizance of matters so intimately connected with elections as the right of voting, admitted the evidence of a man who was proved to have perjured himself, it was time for the House to take the subject into consideration. He would not trouble the House with any further evidence: he had said enough to show that this case was not a light case. He believed that other Members of the House could prove that, in adjoining counties, the same vexatious organized system was pursued. He might, perhaps, be allowed to comment on the bearing of this case, and on the course adopted by the Anti-Corn-Law League. He had heard the leading Members of that body boast, that if they did interfere with the franchise, it was only to extend its ancient rights to those who had been deprived of them. If their system was carried on for such a purpose, that body, which was as much a commercial speculation as a political body, might perhaps find some justification for their proceedings; but whilst they extended the franchise only to those who were favourable to their own views, they made inroads upon the rights of those who were opposed to them? If this system was pursued in those constituencies especially which had been threatened by the hon. Member for Stockport, it must end in their disfranchisement or in their corruption. He wished to refer this matter to a Committee, moved for, not by himself, but by an hon. Member politically opposed to him, in order that the matter might be inquired into and reported upon by a Committee upon whose constitution no shadow of partiality could be cast; and he called on the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government to assist in effecting this object. If the right hon. Baronet thought that this Committee was not competent to inquire into the facts he had stated, he would move for another; but he pre-

ferred this because it could not be supposed that he had any influence in it as the person who made the selection. When he heard the right hon. Baronet withdraw the expression of a dark suspicion which for some years had remained reflecting discredit on the hon. Member for Stockport and the Anti-Corn-Law-League; and when, too, he withdrew it at such a juncture, he thought it behoved the right hon. Baronet, for the sake of his character, to show that there was no collusion between that hon. Member and himself. He told the right hon. Baronet that though he might treat it lightly, there was a deep impression abroad that the existence of, and the agitation kept up by the Anti-Corn-Law League had had great influence upon the recent conduct of Her Majesty's Government. It behoved the right hon. Baronet to be careful that he did not foster this impression by staying inquiry into the practices of that association upon the franchise of electors. The right hon. Baronet might be blameless; but he (Mr. Newdegate) would humbly suggest, that it would be better that the right hon. Baronet should not even in appearance lend himself to the avoidance of this inquiry. He urged this matter in no factious spirit; and if he heard sufficient reason given why he (Mr. Newdegate) should move for a Select Committee to inquire into the charges he had made, he would move for it; but he preferred their being referred to one which was appointed on the Motion of an hon. Member to whom he was politically opposed, because he was (himself) a member of the Protection Society, and he had no wish to make it a question between that society and the Anti-Corn-Law League; but he believed it to be a question between the House and the Anti-Corn-Law League whether such an association should be permitted to interfere with the franchise of the country in the manner which he had endeavoured to illustrate. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving his instruction to the Committee in the terms already stated.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, he had listened very attentively to the statement which had been made to the House by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Newdegate), and he agreed with the hon. Member that no light case was suggested to the consideration of the House; for, both perjury and a vexatious system of giving notices of objection to voters, had been attributed to some agent of the Anti-Corn-Law League. But he would ask the House, admitting the whole case as stated by the hon. Member, what had the House to do with the matter? A Committee had been appointed to inquire into a breach of privilege, in the affixing fraudulent signatures to a petition by which it was intended to mislead the House. This was a proper subject for inquiry; but he could not see how the parties implicated in the way stated by the hon. Member were chargeable with a breach of privilege. Perjury was alleged to have been committed in the revising barristers' courts; and the party guilty of that offence was amenable to, and punishable by, the laws of the country, without the interference of the House. Then came the question as to the issuing the notices of objection by the agents of the Anti-Corn-Law League. That was not a breach of privilege, though it was undoubtedly a vexatious and harassing proceeding towards the body of electors; but it was the error of the whole of the registration system, with which he (Mr. T. Duncombe) had repeatedly found fault in his place in that House. The cry had been, "Register, register, register!" and that the battle of the nation was to be fought in the revising barristers' courts. The same system of annoyance and vexation had long been pursued in many of the boroughs of the country; and now that it was felt in the counties among the electors and tenants at will, hon. Members were ready enough, on finding the shoe pinched them, to complain. Still, he repeated, that it was no breach of privilege, and that the parties who were annoyed or interfered with, had a remedy at law if they choose to have recourse to it. If the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Newdegate) would move for a Select Committee to inquire into the whole system of Parliamentary Registration, with a view to reform the Reform Act, and to get rid of the finality of that measure, he (Mr. T. Duncombe) should be happy to afford every assistance; and to such a motion he hoped the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would give his support. He (Mr. T. Duncombe) saw that his name had been put down as a Member of the Committee to whom the Cheltenham petition stood referred; but he must decline to serve upon it if the Committee was to be burdened with the additional duty which the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Newdegate) sought now to cast upon it.

Mr. NEWDEGATE, in explanation, begged, in reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury, to

state, that none of the parties who had been annoyed wished to prosecute the unhappy tools of the Anti-Corn-Law League, which could only lead to the imprisonment of this unhappy person: their object and his own was to put an end to this organized system of vexatious and frivolous objections to good and well-qualified voters. [*Cries of* "Spoke, spoke!"] He had a right, he believed, to explain. He did not contemplate a reference to a Committee on the Reform Act, or on the whole question of Registration: but he desired that the Committee which had been duly constituted to inquire into the forgery of signatures by the agents of this association, should also inquire into the conduct of the same body, which by fraudulent and vexatious objections had been guilty of an organized system of annoyance to a large body of electors.

MR. ADDERLEY thought, that a separate Committee appointed specifically to inquire into the subject of the annoying notices of objections, would be better than the adoption of the instruction which his hon. Friend had moved to the Committee appointed to inquire into the circumstances attending the manufacture of the Cheltenham petition in the town of Manchester. If his hon. Friend, however, pressed his Motion, he (Mr. Adderley) should support it, because he thought there was some analogy between the two subjects. He, however, was of opinion that legislation would be necessary to cure the evils which were most justly complained of as existing in the registration courts. He knew that a Bill had been prepared by a Friend of his, and would shortly be introduced; but still he (Mr. Adderley) hoped that an inquiry into the subject would be gone into before that Bill came under consideration. If the House would permit him, he would read, very shortly, some extracts from a petition he had received, very numerously signed, from North Staffordshire. The petition he meant to present as early as he could, and to move that it be printed with the Votes. The petitioners stated, that although their names had been on the register of voters for North Staffordshire for many years, and that the sufficiency of their qualification was notorious amongst their neighbours, and easily to be ascertained by any person who justly wished to clear the registry of improper votes, they had, to the number of two thousand, been served with most frivolous and vexatious notices of objection, which were signed by an inhabitant of the county, though they had been posted at Manchester by a political confederation, which sought to rob the lawful electors of the representation of their county. The petitioners further stated, that they had been put to great expense and inconvenience to attend the revising barrister's court to substantiate their right to the elective franchise; and they further alleged, that the protection afforded to them by the Legislature had proved inefficient and inoperative, inasmuch as their costs were frequently refused them, on the ground of technical inaccuracies, or, if granted, its amount was so small as to be wholly inadequate to compensate for the expense and trouble to which they were exposed by the acts of a body of men who were in possession of ample and adequate funds. When he had presented this petition he should move that it be printed with the Votes, and upon it he should feel it his duty to bring its allegations under the attention and consideration of the House.

MR. WAKLEY considered the present system of registration a bad one. Under it the most fraudulent practices frequently took place. But the matter was certainly of too much importance to be incidentally referred to a Committee appointed to consider another subject with which that of the system of registration had no legitimate connexion. He trusted the Motion would be withdrawn. The Government, he was sure, would feel prepared to lend their aid in the correction of the system, which could not be effected in the clumsy way now proposed. The hon. Gentleman dealt very hardly with the Anti-Corn-Law League. He had charged a man with forgery, and yet adopted his testimony as sufficient to warrant him in accusing and condemning the League; and so lightly and delicately had the party of the hon. Member dealt with that man, that though he was charged with atrocious crimes, they had done nothing to bring him to justice.

SIR R. PEEL: When this question was brought under the notice of the House, I stated that in my opinion it was not advisable to devolve on the Committee appointed yesterday any other inquiry than that which had been specially referred to it, but that it would be infinitely better that the Committee should direct its attention exclusively to the alleged breach of the privileges of this House. That opinion I still maintain. It is very easy for the hon. Gentleman to insinuate a collusion between a Minister of the Crown and an hon. Gentleman a Mem-

ber of the House. There is not the slightest foundation for the hon. Gentleman's remark, which is of such a kind that I am obliged to give it an answer, lest were I to remain silent, some persons might draw injurious inferences. And therefore, rather than that such inferences should be drawn, I tell the hon. Gentleman that neither on the subject of the Corn Laws, nor on any other public subject, or private subject, had I ever any communication, direct or indirect, with the Anti-Corn-Law League, or with any member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, so far as I remember. The hon. Gentleman founds his surmise upon what passed the other night, in consequence of a reference made by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Disraeli) to an imputation from which I thought at the time I had relieved the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden). At any rate there could be no concert between myself and the Members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, for it was on the hon. Member for Shrewsbury's allusion to the circumstance, that spontaneously, and as any Gentleman would, I rose to declare the fact that I had long before stated that the imputation did not rest on the hon. Member for Stockport. That is the circumstance on which the hon. Gentleman founds his insinuation. I now come to the real merits of the question. I understood the hon. Member for Staffordshire to state that some person not connected with the county objected to voters upon the list. I thought it a gross abuse. If it is alleged that the party in question objected indiscriminately to some thousand or two of voters, the tendency of such a practice is to interfere with the privileges of the electors; and the Anti-Corn-Law League, or any other body that employs such party, or sanctions his proceedings, pursues a course which ought not to be pursued. I retain my objection to the transference of this inquiry to this Committee; but if, as I understand, the right hon. Gentleman has a petition on which his allegations are founded, it may be a question for him whether or not he may not propose the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into that matter.

Mr. SPOONER observed, that the hon. Member for Finsbury had charged the Member for North Warwickshire with unfairly charging the Anti-Corn-Law League with being mixed up with the proceedings. The facts were these. The same witness appeared in court as a witness for the Anti-Corn-Law-League. He was called by the Gentlemen of the Anti-Corn-Law League, who came there for the express purpose of challenging those votes. In all the cases where costs were given against the witness, those costs were paid by the gentlemen of the Anti-Corn-Law League. When they found he was no longer to be accredited, at their request and desire the witness was withdrawn. That clearly proved that his friend was quite right in dealing with the man as the acknowledged accredited agent of the Anti-Corn-Law League. He thought the question itself one of serious importance. The man who signed the objection lived in a remote part. Every one of the objections came through the post-office of Manchester. There was another point to which the attention of the House ought to be directed. They were posted at Manchester so late, that it was utterly impossible for the post-office, unless they neglected a public duty, to forward the notices in time to reach the dwelling-houses of the persons objected to. But the law said that the putting in the post-office should be of itself proof of a delivery. He had been objected to, and the notice came two days after the time. It was by mere accident that he received it in time to forward it to his solicitor to attend and substantiate his vote. With regard to the motion immediately before the House, he advised his hon. Friend to withdraw it; but he ought to move for a Committee to inquire into the facts now stated, with a view to the immediate remedy of the evil.

Sir. G. GREY hoped the inquiry, if gone into, would not be narrowed to the facts alleged. It should extend to the whole working of the Registration Act. He had before expressed the opinion that the provisions of that Act exposed voters to very vexatious proceedings. Objections of much force had been stated to the Act; but there was no remedy. He thought it but a just arrangement that those parties who had once established their right to vote, should not be liable to have their votes challenged from year to year. The evil had been more felt by hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House. The shoe now pinched on the other side. He trusted this inquiry, when instituted, would be carried out with a view to remove the sources of vexation, which parties of different political opinions availed themselves of not for honest purposes, but for the mere sake of annoyance.

Mr. DISRAELI wished, as his name had been very unexpectedly brought into the discussion, to say a few words in ex-

planation. It had been stated, that some observations which fell the other evening from the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) were called forth by an allusion he (Mr. Disraeli) had made in the course of discussion—as if in something he had said he had been ripping up old grievances. He had made an allusion in the most legitimate spirit of debate. The hon. Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand) was accused of charging the Anti-Corn-Law League with abetting assassination. The hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Bright) intimated, that if they could have fixed that charge on the hon. Member for Knaresborough, they would have prosecuted him. On hearing this statement, he reminded the House that a similar charge had been made in that House by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel). He had read that the hon. Member for Stockport, considering the charge unretracted, had declared it utterly impossible that he could hold communication with the Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman said to-night that he had taken the first opportunity of putting himself right, it having been supposed that he had thrown out such an imputation. But he (Mr. Disraeli) begged to remind the right hon. Gentleman, that he referred to the very same circumstance last year, under circumstances, too, of excitement. The right hon. Gentleman did not then show that extreme alacrity in putting himself right for which he had taken credit.

SIR R. PEEL said: I wish to refer to what I did say upon that occasion. The hon. Member for Stockport had stated—

"In what I said, I intended—and I believe everybody understood what I meant—to speak of the right hon. Baronet as the head of the Government; I used the words 'individually responsible,' as the right hon. Baronet uses the personal pronoun when he says, 'I passed the Tariff, and you supported me.' I treated the right hon. Baronet as the Government."

I followed the hon. Gentleman in this debate, and I then said—

"I am bound to accept the construction the hon. Gentleman puts on the language he employed; but he uses the words in a marked manner, and others put a different interpretation upon them, and thought that by 'individual' he meant 'personal.'"

I admitted at once my error, and if any one at the time had intimated to me that my reparation was not sufficient, I would at once, or on some other day, have taken the opportunity of stating what I did mean; the facts of the case justified me in the impression that I meant at the time to withdraw the imputation.

MR. WYNN ELLIS said, the system of making objections had been acted on for many years past; he had himself been objected to during the last year; on inquiry it would be found that no less than 2,000 persons had been so objected to in the county in which he had a franchise, and all the objections proceeded from the Conservative party. If the Anti-Corn-Law had adopted the same system, they had only acted on the example of the other party.

VISCOUNT SANDON said, the system was an improper one, and he did not care with which party it originated. At present every man was bound to be at his town or country residence a certain time of the year to protect his vote; if absent it was endangered. That was an unconstitutional impediment to the free enjoyment of the elective franchise. In Lancashire, 2,000 objections had been sent, and they all came through the Manchester post-office; they were scattered over a period of three weeks, and the result had been that many gentlemen of undoubted property had been struck off the list. He hoped this system would be put an end to.

MR. LAWSON said, the right hon. Baronet had told them that he was of the same opinion to-day as yesterday, and appeared to think that such an assertion would hardly find credit with the House, for he had repeated it twice. He was glad to hear the right hon. Baronet deny that he had any connexion with the Anti-Corn-Law League; but from what they had seen this Session, he thought the hon. Member for Warwickshire had some cause to imagine such a connexion might exist; but as it had been denied, of course he and other Gentlemen were bound to believe there was none.

MR. BROTHERTON said, formerly the hon. Gentlemen were the objectors; in his own borough 700 objections had been served, his own vote having been objected to for four years successively. He should be glad to see the system rectified; indeed it had rectified itself to a considerable extent. When it was found by Gentlemen on this side of the House that they could get no redress from the House they adopted the same policy. "When bad men combine, good men must unite." He thought the Anti-Corn-Law League had done much service by the exertion they had made; they had also endeavoured to

create a constituency in the different counties; and they might depend that if the League was not put down, by enacting the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, it would go on to an extent that hon. Gentlemen opposite would not like. The right hon. Baronet had shown more foresight as to the mode in which the League was to be put down. The upper men in the employ of the manufacturers of Lancashire were purchasing cottages and freeholds, and felt pride in having a voice in the representation of the county; they would send up men who would enact such laws only as were just, and for the good of the whole community. No part of the quarter of a million fund was expended in anything connected with the purchase of freeholds; they were bought by persons who had saved money to do so, and who had as great a right to the franchise as the owners of the largest estate.

Mr. FERRAND said, they did not quarrel with making good votes, but to sending objections to votes known to be good before, which was quite the reverse. The same system of objecting had been carried on in the West Riding of Yorkshire; and the noble Lord (Lord Morpeth) was returned in consequence of the wholesale objections that had been made against the voters of that district. His own vote had been objected to for four years in succession; and he could get no redress till he threatened to bring an action against the objecting party for the costs he was put to. The same system had been carried on in every county; and if the League was permitted to pursue this course, in a few years they would swamp all the *bonâ fide* voters, and be able to return Members who would not represent the honest electors, but would be returned by a minority, the majority of voters having been destroyed by a wholesale system of perjury and forgery.

Mr. C. BULLER said, he differed in opinion from hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House. He did not see the necessity for this inquiry at all. They had arrived at a stage far beyond inquiry. Every person on both sides of the House was quite convinced of the enormity and extent of the evil, and was perfectly prepared to give a favourable reception to the remedy. He did not know whether it would be a proper Amendment to move upon the Motion of the hon. Member for Warwickshire, but he confessed he felt inclined to move that leave be given to the hon. Member for Staffordshire to bring in the Bill he had got in his pocket. There were, no doubt, cases in which inquiries of this kind were necessary to lay the foundation of legislation; but they had often seen them entered into for the purpose of preventing legislation, and the House might fall into this evil on the present occasion. The abuse was acknowledged to exist, and to exist on both sides; they had followed the laudable example set them by the Gentlemen opposite. The extent of the abuse had often been deplored by them; yet year after year, when they brought in measures to prevent these abuses, the Gentlemen opposite, as much those below the gangway as above it, denied the evil and opposed the remedy. He was delighted to see that the example set by the hon. Gentlemen behind the Treasury benches was imitated by the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway; they did not blush to get up and repeat, as their own, the very doctrines those around him had formerly asserted. Now, let them have no more recrimination; there had been a great deal of sinning on both sides, from the time of the Charles Street Society down to that of the Anti-Corn-Law League; the tactics of that society had been only perfected by the agency, ability, and capital of the League; but as it was a bad practice, initiated from each other, let them put an end to it; it was a practice detrimental not to party alone, but to all representative Government and the best interests of the country. He believed they would find in the Bill of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) an attempt to remedy this abuse; and as it was the fashion to adopt their measures on the other side, he could not recommend a better course than to adopt that measure to put an end to the evil.

Viscount INGESTRE perfectly concurred in the observations of the hon. and learned Member for Liskeard; the question was one far above party; the effects of the abuse were fatal to the constituency at large. He thought a name once placed on the list and properly proved ought to remain there.

Mr. C. WOOD said, the hon. Member for Knaresborough had complained of the objections served in the West Riding of Yorkshire; but the hon. Member had been himself as great a sinner in this way as any one. On one occasion a great number of notices of objections were sent, signed by the hon. Member himself, and one of them was delivered to the hon. Member's

own uncle, whom he knew to have as good a vote as any one in the West Riding. [Mr. Ferrand: When?] He could not say in what year. The fact was so, and he did not suppose the hon. Gentleman would deny it, for an hon. Gentleman was present to whom a notice was sent, signed by the hon. Member. He thought the hon. Member should be more cautious in the accusations he brought against others. With regard to the West Riding, it was not true that the objections were made by the Anti-Corn-Law League; there were registration societies in that district, conducted by respectable men, belonging to both parties, and they made the objections and defended them. The system of registration had become such, that it could only be worked by such bodies; a single voter could not defend his franchise unless he belonged to one or other of the great parties. This was a great practical grievance which called for a remedy.

Mr. FERRAND begged the indulgence of the House while he replied to the personal attack just made on him by the hon. Member. When the hon. Member talked of what took place several years ago, he should have said that he (Mr. Wood) had just been prompted by some one within the last half minute. [Mr. C. Wood: I do deny it most distinctly.] The hon. Gentleman had insinuated that he had been objector-general to votes in the West Riding; that he had made objections to a great number of votes. In that division he was, as chairman of the registration committee, called upon, and he did sign notices of objection; but at all times when doing so he had stated distinctly, that nothing should induce him to be a party to objecting to votes unless good grounds were shown for the proceeding. He had objected to the vote of the hon. Member for Bradford, his relative, and he had done so for this reason—that a person who for three years in succession had objected to his vote, had received a silver teapot for his services, towards the payment of which his relative had been a subscriber. He had then, incensed at this, declared that if he received in the fourth year another objection, he would, in retaliation, object to his relative's qualification. It was on that ground alone that he had so acted, and he considered that he was fully justified.

Mr. WORTLEY was enabled, fully, to confirm the statements of the hon. Member for Halifax touching the system carried on in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He had had his own vote objected to three years running; on the last occasion, the notice being signed by a person bearing the name of Ashworth, and coming from Manchester, and emanating, it might therefore be concluded, from the Anti-Corn-Law League. ["No, no."] So totally unjustified and so vexatious were these notices, that he had at last threatened to bring an action against the interfering parties to recover the costs of defence; and if he had not himself been a member of the bar, such was the course which he would have adopted. It would give him great pleasure to see an end put to the system, and facilities given to recover the expenses of the defensive litigation. In dealing with the matter, the House should not lose sight of the subject of the creation of votes. The West Riding had recently been the scene of an experiment in that way, and it had been so far successful, that by the means of the Anti-Corn-Law League some 2,000 new votes had been added to the previously existing registration. Were these, as he did not say they were not, *bonâ fide* votes, there could be no dissatisfaction; but the prevailing opinion in the district was, that directly the reverse was the fact. Such a case as this had been, it was rumoured, of frequent occurrence. A gentleman, having influence over a body of workmen, and who lets cottages to them to rent, persuaded them to enter conjointly into the purchase of them; a covenant to that effect was drawn up; the Agent of the Anti-Corn-Law League being called upon to negotiate the transaction; the proprietor of the cottages lent the necessary funds to the workmen, took a promissory note for the payment, and stopped the interest from the weekly wages.

Mr. BRIGHT desired to assure the hon. Member for Buteshire (Mr. Wortley), that Mr. Ashworth, of the Anti-Corn-Law League, had taken no part in the signature of the objection which it was mentioned had been received by the hon. Member. With respect to the creation of freeholds, he was enabled, with equal confidence, to declare that the Anti-Corn-Law League had not only never recommended the creation of such votes in the way alluded to, but had consistently, both in the speeches of its lecturers and in its authorized writings, given the public to understand that all such votes were untenable, unjust, and in defiance of every fair principle of registration founded upon the

possession of property. He knew of no instance of such a vote having been obtained through, or with the approbation of, the Anti-Corn-Law League. The advice of the League always had been, and still was, with the view of inducing every man to save as much money as would qualify him, by a *bonâ fide* purchase of a sufficient amount of property; and he defied any man in the House or elsewhere who cared for the spirit of the institutions of the country, so far as these were valuable, to say that a freehold, possessed on that principle, was injurious, or could, in any degree, be interfered with. It was refreshing to see that when hon. Gentleman opposite were *in extremis* as to the Corn Law, they found some consolation for that which was gone and passed away in a testy examination of the organization of the League. The case which the hon. Member for Warwickshire spoke of had been dealt with in the newspapers, and had even been dilated upon in the speeches of the hon. Member; but since that, the hon. Gentleman, either at Willis's Rooms or at 7, Old Bond Street, had joined in the adoption of a resolution, by which the protectionists declared that they would fight the League with its own weapons. The hon. Member for Knaresborough, with not an unusual lack of caution, had made an a statement relative to the West Riding. He could only say, that if the hon. Gentleman went to the proper offices, and consulted the proper papers of the registration for the West Riding, of protectionists and free traders, he would find, that in the last year the monopolists made a far larger number of objections to free traders than the free traders did to monopolists. He had once been called from Northumberland and once from Scotland to defend his vote. The agricultural party had well obeyed the injunction of the right hon. Baronet to register. As had been said by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, "How we did register!"—and how could they find fault with the League for acting in self-defence? He had been told that the other day a noble Duke, through his Agent, put four sons of a farmer, with the farmer himself, into one lease, with the object of gaining so many more votes; and he had also heard, that in Scotland another noble Duke had taken the means to give nineteen persons the power of voting on one farm. So long as the monopolists were fighting a battle against the country, and so long as they thought there was a chance of obtaining power, there was nothing which went against the spirit of registration which they would not do — no conduct they would not practise. Now the tables were turned, and the game was up. They had warred against the general interests and common sense, and now they were a broken party. The free traders, on the contrary, were a compact body, with an invincible principle which they were determined should be the basis of legislation; and to secure the presence of a majority in the House to vote for the abolition of the Corn Law, there were no means which the law allowed and which justice sanctioned that should be left untried. They had made up their minds to do that; but they would go with the Government in any proposition to give the proper advantages and defence to the honest elector. By every new change which was to make the system a better system the free traders would gain. Hon. Gentlemen might seek to revenge themselves on the League; but the fact had gone forth to the world that the law was as good as dead, and not all the speeches they could muster—not even those of the hon. Member for Warwickshire, solemn as they were, could ever wake from the grave that which, with all due ritual, had been buried.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN regretted that anything had occurred to disturb the celestial serenity of the hon. Member who just spoken. The evil to which attention was drawn was a plain one, and should be dealt with. None could deny the existence of an extensive association, with enormous funds at its command, one of the great objects of which was systematically to interfere in the registration of every county in the kingdom. The effect was to marshal every county into two parties—to fight the battle of registration by subscription—and to injure most deeply, as a necessary consequence, those who were unwilling to go to extreme lengths, either on one side or the other, in politics. The matter was not introduced at the present moment because, as the hon. Member had facetiously said, the Corn Law was dead, but they brought it forward to the notice of the House because they saw an association, a vast money-power, such as he had described, interfering in an unconstitutional manner with constitutional rights, and which was either to be left to its evil operation, or, to be effectually encountered, to be met by a similar association, thus perpetuating a similar evil. They asked the House to decide the case between them. That was

the question before them. As to the resolutions passed at Willis's rooms, he had not heard any hon. Gentleman on that (the Ministerial) side of the House, propose or approve of the adoption of any such system as the creation of false votes. The contest was unfair; on the one side an enormous money-power at work, and on the other no such thing.

MR. E. ELLICE, JUN., understood hon. Gentlemen opposite to complain, not that it was necessary a battle should be fought, but that the weapons provided were unequal. In the county with which he was connected, the system condemned so loudly existed in full force; but it was practised by the party with whom the present complaint originated. There a Conservative registration association was formed by all the county men, the end sought after being to destroy, as far as was possible, the preponderating power of the Reformers—a wealthy party attempting to suppress freedom of opinion in the district boroughs, which were composed of the poorer classes. The evil was in Scotland incalculable; for unless assistance was afforded to the poor voters to go twenty miles to the Sheriff's Court, and defend his qualification, his name was struck off the list. If the hon. Member for Buteshire doubted the existence of fictitious votes, he had only to examine the evidence taken before a Committee of the House, asked for some years ago by the hon. Member for Cockermouth (Mr. Horsman), to convince himself of the fact being as had been stated. It would give him (Mr. Ellice) great gratification to see a corrective measure emanate from the Government.

MR. BORTHWICK was sorry that he could not say, with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that they were all agreed; because he really thought they were not. He would go to the original question—whether an inquiry should be instituted into the highly unconstitutional proceedings of the Anti-Corn-Law League. He thought that the debate upon that question had been turned to another subject, namely, the nature of the Registration Act. He did not mean to say that that was not a question which demanded the attention of the House; but at the same time it was a totally distinct question. The real question before the House was, whether certain acts so unconstitutional as to be subversive in their nature of the entire system of English laws, had been perpetrated by that body which called itself the Anti-Corn-Law League? The hon. Member for Durham said that the Anti-Corn Law League were doing most righteous work. That was, they were collecting together half a million of English money for the purpose of enabling honest men to purchase freeholds, or, perhaps, they only spent the half million of pounds in merely persuading those men. He thought these were the very words, as he took them down at the moment. That the Anti-Corn Law League persuaded honest men, upper servants and others, men who, out of honest earnings had saved some little trifle, to purchase those freeholds. No fault could be found with that mode of proceeding if they were impartial; but if they were not, they were then labouring to introduce into the electoral body of the country a majority in an illegal manner. If the electoral body were left alone, without tampering with, it would present a certain amount of opinion on one side and on the other. He trusted that a Committee would be formed to enter into an inquiry concerning the operations of the Anti-Corn-Law League.

MR. O'CONNELL wished to say one word only—one word for Ireland. He understood the complaint was that frivolous and vexatious notices of objections were served, compelling the voters to take long journeys for the purpose of proving their qualification. Now in Ireland, by the Irish law, it was not necessary to serve such objections, for every voter must go and state his case without any notice whatever. He must travel twenty miles, and in the county which he represented, fifty, to put his case on record; and if he failed to attend, and personally prove his qualification, he could not exercise his right to vote. There was no necessity for any notice of objection; if anybody questioned the vote, the case must be heard to the satisfaction of that individual. [MR. FERRAND: Is that annually?] No, not annually; and that was another grievance; for the consequence of the registration system in Ireland was to afford facilities to the committing of fraud; so that the thing was worse. In the county which he represented, in three or four populous parishes there was not a man who could register a vote without travelling fifty miles or more, first, as in a case of ejectment, to substantiate his right. And what was the result? He represented a county with a population of 735,000, and only 2,300 were on the registry. He

stated these things as useful to know in an inquiry. They were evils which, years ago, he had urged in vain to Gentleman on his side of the House. He was not aware if he might entertain a hope of meeting with better success from the powerful party on the opposite side; but, if not, he would content himself with having exposed what was, practically, a grievance.

Mr. M. MILNES should be exceedingly glad if a remedy could be applied to the evils which had been the subject of that evening's discussion; and he trusted that when the question again came before them, Ireland would not be forgotten; for he thought it would be altogether contrary to the whole spirit of the administration of the right hon. Baronet if he remedied the evils in England, and left them to continue in Ireland. In saying this, he wished to protest against the assumption of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller), who, with his usual amusing ability, had attempted to lay down the position that the guilt of the case, whatever it might be, was perfectly equal between the two parties; or, if possible, if such a thing could be imagined, there was greater guilt on that, the Ministerial, side of the House. Now, he would merely ask his hon. and learned Friend whether, if the landowners were to parcel out portions of their estates for the purpose of making votes, and meet the Anti-Corn-Law League with their own weapons, they would not be able, with the greatest facility, to beat the League out of the field. He was certain that in his county Lord Harewood could, out of his own estate alone, make as many votes as the League. But he rejoiced to say that the landowners of England had not entered into what he considered such an unworthy conflict. He believed that the spirit of the county representation implied the requisite of residence; and that the Members for counties should represent the opinions of the electors resident in those counties. If all the sums collected by the Anti-Corn-Law League were devoted to the purpose of enabling the farmers of England to give anti-corn-law votes, he thought it would be a rather expensive proceeding. Indeed, it would be very difficult for the League to impress upon the mind of the public that their quarter of a million of money was to be spent solely in facilitating votes. Why, everybody knew what "facilitating votes" was. It might be perfectly true, that in their written documents they said nothing about assisting men in the purchase of votes. But they did not know what their agents and the parties to whom the money was instrusted would do, or if they would properly carry out the intentions of the League. It was utterly incompatible with their enthusiasm on the subject that it should be so. If, however, the 2,000 votes which it was said were added to the register of the West Riding were real *bonâ fide* voters, and had obtained the franchise by their own money, it was a fact at which he must rejoice. With regard to the question which had occupied the attention of the House, he thought that it was only by legislation that any good could be effected; and he was disposed to think, therefore, that the proposition before the House would encumber their future proceedings.

Lord J. RUSSELL said: I have always thought that the delivery of hundreds of objections, without inquiring whether the votes are good or not, is a great abuse; and many years ago I introduced a Bill upon the subject, in which I provided, as I thought, a remedy. I will not now discuss whether it was a proper remedy or not; but I proposed that, after the voter had been twice before the registration court, and had his name placed upon the list, his vote should not again be objected to, unless some particular circumstances had arisen to justify it, such as a change of occupation, or his parting with a portion of it. That was my remedy for what I considered as an abuse. I confess that it does not seem to me to make any difference in the case that the Anti-Corn-Law League have done this; and when hon. Gentlemen say that you must inquire into the subject because the Anti-Corn-Law League have done it; for my part I cannot see the sense or the justice of saying that you must inquire into it when it is done by the League; but you must leave the abuse to remain as it is when it is done by other political parties who have other aims in view than the abolition of the Corn Law. I think, as my hon. Friend the Member for Liskeard said, you should have a general remedy to prevent parties, for any purpose whatever, interposing this vexation, delay, and expense, which do, in fact, disfranchise many of the real freeholders. The hon. and learned Member for Buteshire (Mr. Wortley) has alluded to the creation of fictitious votes. I be-

lieve that nowhere has that practice been carried to such a great extent as in Scotland. I have heard, and he also must have heard, many instances in which the right of voting has been created, where, in fact, the voter does not receive 5*s*. a year from that which nominally gives him 10*l*. a year. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade (Sir G. Clerk) must be aware that that practice has existed, and that many elections have been carried by those voters who really have no property in the county. I do hope, when remedies are applied, that they will be general and legislative remedies; and that they will not be adopted for any purpose or party in particular. With regard to those voters who have been encouraged by the Anti-Corn-Law League to purchase freeholds, if, as the hon. and learned Member for Bute says, there have been in Yorkshire instances of workmen having no real property, who have obtained legal instruments whereby they vote, then I say that that is a fraud, and it ought to be put a stop to. But if, on the other hand, men, having gained a sum of 50*l*. or 60*l*. by their industry, choose, at the instigation of the Anti-Corn-Law League, or any other body, to lay out that money in the purchase of freehold land, they receiving the rents and profits of that land, and appear before the registration courts to establish their votes, then I say those votes are as good as any others. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Milnes) says, that the freehold right of voting in the counties of England implies residence. Now, I deny that that has ever been the case. It never has been necessary for the purpose of voting at county elections; and the right hon. Gentleman opposite will perhaps recollect that, in considering all the points of the franchise at the time of the Reform Bill, that point amongst others was considered, and it was fully and deliberately determined to leave the right of non-resident voters as it had existed from all time, and as it is now existing. I shall therefore oppose any proposition which may be made for disfranchising county voters on the ground of non-residence.

MR. HUME said his vote had been objected to for three successive years. He hoped the time had come when there was a disposition in both parties to look fairly at the subject, and that they might have as many voters as possible who were honestly entitled to the franchise; for he was anxious to create protectionist as well as free-trade voters. As the matter was before the House, the Government would probably bring in a Bill, as they had ample evidence before them on which to found one.

MR. AGLIONBY said, with respect to the crimination and recrimination upon this subject, he thought one party had been as much to blame as the other. The only question to be considered was whether they should proceed by inquiry, or by bringing in a Bill. He hoped that the admissions made on all sides would preclude the necessity of a Committee; both sides seemed anxious that a Bill should be brought in. But he warned whoever brought in that Bill not to attempt to tamper with the registration, which would not remedy the abuse. Much might be done by simplifying the suffrage, and more by extending the suffrage; they would do little good if they did not largely extend the suffrage, stopping not much short of household suffrage, He agreed with the noble Lord, that the moment a created vote was actually made it was as good as any other; but supposing the Anti-Corn-Law League—he put the supposition in their case not by way of complaint, but of illustration—supposing that or any other body, with large funds at command, were to employ them in procuring votes to a great extent throughout the kingdom: they did not purchase votes, but they persuaded people to purchase votes. So far, so good; but suppose some great body persuaded people to purchase votes, they would get a set of instruments for their own purposes. Their object might be good or bad: he believed the object of the Anti-Corn Law League to be a good one; but if it might be employed for a good purpose, it might be abused for a bad one. Every voter so made would be, *pro hac vice*, a mere machine in the hands of the makers, for there could be no guarantee. Was it to be believed that a voter so made would immediately turn round? Any large body, with money, going through the county, employing their funds for a bad purpose, might put upon the register persons who would vote as they were desired to vote. He would legalize votes so largely that there could be no motive to create votes.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON rejoiced to hear what had fallen from the hon. Member who just spoken. He had been anxious to state, with reference to the question of

the Corn Laws, a burden which fell upon real property. It was necessary that associations should be formed to defray the expenses which offered an impediment to a poor man buying real property, consisting not only of stamps to the revenue, but lawyers' expenses, owing to legal formalities. An association was obliged to be formed to enable a poor man to obtain what all were desirous he should get.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he begged to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CHELTENHAM PETITION—PRIVILEGE.

MR. C. BERKELEY moved the appointment of Members upon the Select Committee on the petition from Cheltenham in favour of a repeal of the Corn Laws. The hon. Member begged the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, who were Members of the House, to understand that he was influenced by no motive of hostility to them in moving for this Committee. He thought it was a rule, not only in private but in public life, that where fraud or imposition was alleged, it ought to be traced up. Long diatribes had been directed against him, charging him with being actuated, in moving for this Committee, by general hostility towards the hon. Member for Durham, because he had moved for a Committee on the Game Laws; and other allegations much too contemptible to mention. He utterly denied that he was influenced by hostility to the Gentlemen of the League, or to any other persons whatever.

Motion agreed to.

TOTAL AND IMMEDIATE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

House in Committee on the Customs and Corn Importation Acts.

MR. BANKES said, that the right hon. Baronet, when he spoke last night, had made an allegation, and drawn an inference from that allegation, in both of which he (Mr. Bankes) had reason to believe he was entirely mistaken. The right hon. Baronet had alleged that the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. W. Miles) had said in his place in that House, that he was decidedly in favour of the immediate and entire abolition of the Corn Laws, in preference to the proposition of the Government. He had not been in the House himself when his hon. Friend had spoken; but on hearing of the inference drawn from his hon. Friend's words, he had asked him whether it were the fact that he had so spoken; and his hon. Friend had told him that it was directly the contrary—that he had not intended to make any such declaration—and that he had not used any words from which that inference could be fairly drawn. The right hon. Baronet had proceeded to say that no one of those who sat near the hon. Member for Somersetshire had expressed any dissent to that allegation which he had made. His hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire was, however, absent from London, and he was happy to say on account of a joyful occurrence in his family. But with reference to another absence to which the right hon. Baronet had alluded, and that, too, in his presence, he was sure he would be sorry to learn that the absence to which the right hon. Baronet had with some humour referred, as being the absence of a skilful leader, had been caused by the death of a very near relation—a circumstance of which he was certain the right hon. Baronet at the time had not been aware. He might, too, be allowed to say that the humorous allusion to what had been called the campaign of grease, and which had been made the foundation of jokes by the Gentlemen on the opposite side, was equally unfounded. With respect to what had been said as to the advantage which would accrue to Ireland from immediate abolition, he did not understand why the right hon. Baronet, when he found acquiescence from all parts of the House, had not proceeded at once to open the ports. That such a measure would have given relief to Ireland he very much doubted; but, if as alleged, it would afford such relief, why had it not been at once adopted? For as to the reason assigned for not opening them in the first instance—viz., that if they were once opened, as the right hon. Baronet alleged, he would not have the power to shut them again, he never could learn how, with such a majority at his back, the right hon. Baronet came to entertain such an opinion. He could not comprehend how the right hon. Baronet would want the power to shut the ports. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) had charged the agriculturists with a want of generosity in their proposition, made, as he had alleged, at a time when there was very little corn in the country, and that little diminishing every day. Now, what was the fact? He had received a statement, from a member of a most eminent firm, of the quantity of corn in the country, and from that it appeared that on the 5th of January

last there were 1,075,000 quarters of corn in bond, and on the 5th of February that quantity had been increased by 168,000 quarters, making in all 1,243,000 quarters of corn in bond at that time. [Mr. Villiers: What is it now?] That account had been made up to the 5th of February last from official returns, but not to a later date. But it appeared that the arrival of supplies continued, while the shipments from this country to foreign ports were very trifling. Seeing the hon. Member for Durham present, as he was sure the hon. Gentleman would wish to have an error into which he had fallen corrected, and as he had taken a noble Duke in the other House to task, he might mention that when the hon. Gentleman, in the former debate, had stated that the Duke of Rutland had paid for damage done by game on 389 acres of land the sum of 900*l.* odd, the hon. Member was entirely in error. As to the amount paid, the hon. Member had been correct, but as to the estate he was in error; for it was a large instead of a very small estate. If the hon. Member had made the acres thousands instead of hundreds, he would have been nearer the truth. The noble Lord the Member for London (Lord J. Russell), in answering some allegations said to have been made on that side of the House with respect to the propriety and expediency of passing the present measure in that Parliament, had assumed that they had questioned the competency of the House. They had done no such thing—they could not question the competency of the House; but they had questioned the expediency or propriety of a measure like that, when no necessity for interference had been shown to exist, being carried in a Parliament, a majority of the Members of which had been returned on a pledge of supporting totally different measures. He assumed that every one of the majority had been returned; but he would give them the odd number between 112 and 97. The noble Lord had also given as a reason for not desiring a dissolution, that the House of Peers would be more ready to attend to the voice of the present Parliament than to that of a new one. He doubted that, when he considered that the other House had often seen how differently the present House had voted on that very question. What, under those circumstances, was to influence the House of Lords in favour of the altered determination of that Parliament? And even if the other House should see the expediency of adopting the measure, he hoped they would, at least, also see that its adoption should be founded on the choice of the people, otherwise they might create a double evil by sanctioning a measure which the voice of their constituency might afterwards repudiate. However, as to the proposition of the Government, he certainly preferred it to that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, as it would enable them, before it came into final operation, to have the voice of their constituents upon it. He denied that there was any reason for stating that the feelings and opinions of the people were changed upon the question since the time when they had returned to that House the largest majority that he believed had ever been sent to it upon any specific question. They had no reason to suppose the opinions of the country were changed in that respect, unless on the ground of the petitions, manufactured as they had been, which had been presented to Parliament. But would those petitions counterbalance the result of the elections? He could not think that any man would for a moment think so. He certainly would decline proceeding far with the Bill until the proposition relating to the law of settlement were brought forward; and as to the other measures which were said to be introduced as measures of compensation, he trusted no one would think of looking at them in that light for one moment. He thought he had a right to demand that when the Bill embodying the measure respecting the importation of corn was introduced, the measure respecting the law of settlement should also be brought in at the same time. He would not say more, as the second reading would be the more fitting stage for further observations. At present the question was between the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton and that of the Government. He thought the latter preferable, because there must be an appeal to the constituency before the three years were determined; and he knew what the opinions of the constituencies were on this subject. His own constituency had that week sent two messengers to that House to testify that they at least had not changed their opinions.

Sir R. PEEL said, that that part of his hon. Friend's speech astonished him very much, in which he said, that he (Sir R. Peel), in making the few observations which he did last night in reference to the speech made by the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. W. Miles), upon the Amendment

proposed by the hon. Member for Bristol, assumed that the hon. Member for Somersetshire intimated an opinion that a measure for an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws was to be preferred to a measure with that object, to be deferred for three years, so far as the interests of the agriculturists were concerned. He assumed that because he thought he heard it with his own ears, and because he thought that on the hon. Member turning round to those hon. Members who sat near him, that opinion was assented to by them; and when he put that construction upon the words of the hon. Gentleman two nights afterwards in his presence, that hon. Gentleman left the House without dissenting from the construction put by him upon the hon. Member's words. But now it appeared that the hon. Gentleman did not prefer a measure for immediate repeal, but it was in favour of his proposal. Then his hon. Friend said he was sure that he (Sir R. Peel) would hear with pain that the hon. Member for Somersetshire was absent from the discussion on grease in consequence of the death of a relative. He certainly was not aware of the cause of the hon. Gentleman's absence when he made the observations respecting him; but though the hon. Member for Somersetshire was absent, two other county Members objected to the removal of the duty on grease, on the same ground as that selected by the hon. Member for Somersetshire, namely, that as there was a duty of 21*s.* on butter, if grease were permitted to come in duty free, it would be used instead of butter.

Mr. BANKES explained, when he heard what the right hon. Baronet had stated as the opinion of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, he asked his hon. Friend did he say so and so? when he expressed himself thus—"I did not, nor had I any such intention of so expressing myself."

Mr. BRIGHT observed, in explanation of what been said by the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, that he had fallen into an error with respect to the amount of money paid by the Duke of Rutland for damage done by game upon his estate near Bakewell, in Derbyshire, that the estate in question consisted of 3,700 acres, a great portion of which was land to a great extent uncultivated. Some portion of the farms were arable, and some pasture land, and he said that 916*l.* had been paid by the Duke of Rutland, in 1844, for the damage done by game on the land growing grain, including a quantity equal to 399 acres, and that no valuation had been made with respect to the grass land. He stated now only what he stated before, and what he knew to be true from the return of the valuator, and what had been admitted by a Member of that House, who did his best to support the cause of the Duke of Rutland.

Mr. C. W. HOWARD said, that he was in favour of an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, and he had no faith in the predictions of those who anticipated evil consequences from such a measure. He thought, indeed, that some of the tenant-farmers would have to lay out more capital, to employ more labourers, and to raise a greater number of quarters of wheat from their farms. That would be the case in those instances particularly where the farmers were selected not so much for their skill and knowledge of farming, as for the votes which they would give at elections. He had such confidence in the skill and perseverance of Englishmen, that he was sure they would maintain their superiority over foreigners without the aid of Acts of Parliament. He always observed that the country was generally prosperous when manufactures prospered. The agriculturists of the north were in a better condition than those of the south, not because they had a more fertile soil or more genial seasons, but because they were close to an increasing market, and were more skilful. He considered that it would be better if the right hon. Baronet had taken the advice of the noble Lord the Member for London, and proposed an immediate repeal, because he believed it would be more for the interests of the agriculturists themselves, and because he did not think it just towards the great experiment they were making to bring free trade to a test, when they might perhaps have concurrently abundant harvests in this country and on the Continent. But he felt so strongly that the measure was for the benefit of the country, that rather than endanger it, he would vote for the proposition of the right hon. Baronet.

Sir J. HANMER said, he had had so many opportunities of expressing his entire satisfaction in the measures introduced by the right hon. Baronet, that he did not consider it would have been necessary to offer any further opinion, unless upon such circumstances as might arise in the course of the debate. He regretted the protraction of that debate, as he considered it prejudicial to the interests of the country, more

particularly of those interests with which he was connected, namely, those of agriculture. He wished to state, with the permission of the House, the particular reasons which induced him to give his support to the Motion of the right hon. Baronet, in preference to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. If he was to look at the hon. Member's proposition as a mere abstract question, he could undoubtedly give his vote in favour of an immediate repeal; but when he had to take into consideration what the consequences might be in case of its adoption by that House, and its rejection by the House of Lords, he felt himself bound to agree with the opinions expressed by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) the Member for the city of London, on the previous night, and give his vote in favour of the Motion of the right hon. Baronet. The noble Lord had mentioned in the course of his speech, that he was well aware that if that proposition had been introduced by him, in case he had formed a Government, he should not have had the support of many of the hon. Gentlemen who were then supporting the right hon. Baronet. In reference to himself, he could say, that if the noble Lord had taken office, and proposed the measure under discussion, he should have felt himself bound to give his vote fully distinct from party; and nothing would have afforded him greater pleasure than to have given every fair and reasonable support to the noble Lord in the carrying of that measure. In every capacity in which he looked upon it, whether as a landholder or Member of Parliament, the representative of a large commercial constituency, or whether he looked backward to the past, or forward to the future, he felt himself bound to give his most cordial support to the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. MOFFAT considered that the arguments advanced by the noble Lord the Member for London, on the previous night, had been quite conclusive as to the advantage to be derived from an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws—an opinion in which hon. Gentlemen opposite appeared fully to concur. All parties, in fact, seemed quite agreed upon the point, until it came to the part where they were called upon to pass it, and all appeared equally inclined to shrink from doing so. The right hon. Baronet seemed to be afraid to move in the right direction; and the noble Lord was inclined to keep in his wake. He had no explanations to make, as his constituents had sent him there lately to support every relaxation that might be proposed of the existing restrictions on the importation of food. But there was one thing which he wished to remark to those hon. Gentlemen who were advocating the principle of continued protection, and that was, that they should all consider the course they were about to take, and reflect upon what had recently taken place in the grain markets: let them go to Mark-lane, and they would find that their corn trade had become paralysed within the last few weeks, and that the country markets were in an equally bad state.

MR. FINCH would confine what he had to say to as few words as possible, and would limit himself to the subject then before the House; and in the first place, he wished no doubt to be entertained in reference to his sentiments. He preferred the proposition of the right hon. Baronet to that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton; but at the same time he had not the slightest desire that that proposition should be passed by that House, although he preferred it to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite, in case either of the propositions were to be adopted by them. He was in favour of having the protection continued for three years, in order that, before the term expired, when the injurious working of the scheme should be known, and the Legislature would have an opportunity of seeing that the country would be going to ruin through its influence, that they should have time to retrace their steps. He had seen a great deal of the agriculturists of England, and had taken an honest part in their exertions, and he believed that they were the most persevering body of people in the world; and from what he knew of them, he was quite sure that the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) had spoken in reference to them under some misapprehension. Agricultural improvement had been going on for forty years. In 1816, to so great a height had agriculture improved, that Lord Brougham stated that no fewer than 1,200 Inclosure Bills had been passed within the previous ten years, which included no less a space of land than 2,000,000 of acres. He also stated that the greatest improvement had taken place in the cultivation of land; not only had large tracts of country that were previously in a barren state been brought into cultivation, but the land under cultivation was very considerably improved, and yielded greater produce, and where there

had been only one blade of grass grown, the same land then produced two; and that noble Lord believed England to be the greatest agricultural country in the world. Since the time when Lord Brougham spoke immense sums of money had been expended in the improvement of agriculture by farmers and landholders; and it was his opinion at that moment, that there was no place in the world in which the soil was so well cultivated. He would mention another fact, which he believed to be such conclusive evidence on the subject, that no one could doubt it. The agriculturists of this country possessed the best breed of cattle in the world, which was acknowledged by the fact that the agricultural societies of Belgium, France, and Prussia, sent to this country to purchase stock. He therefore did think that it was a little hard, when so much had been done by tenants, that they should be denied that credit to which they were entitled, and taunted in that manner by persons high in office, or who might soon be high in office, as if they were lazy drones, who had been backwards in adopting new improvements. He would not notice the tempting offers that had been made to them by the hon. Member for Durham. That hon. Member stated, that if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton were allowed to pass, they would have the Anti-Corn-Law League dissolved; and in the next place, that if they would consent to the proposition, they would not inflict upon them another discussion in reference to that measure. In reply to the hon. Member's first offer, he confessed that he considered the Anti-Corn-Law League a very harmless body of people, who conducted their meetings in a very quiet and orderly manner, and in reference to which the public would not know that such meetings had ever been held but for the newspaper reports of them; and therefore, for his part, he considered that they had not much reason to complain of them, although they had certainly heard something about their exertions in manufacturing voters; but as perhaps others might be charged with similar conduct, he would not say much about that. Their meetings, however, he maintained, were perfectly innocent. But even if they were not so, he could not see how that should bear upon a question of that nature, as every measure should be decided upon its own merits alone, and was not to be carried by means of out-door clamour. The agriculturists cared very little for the Anti-Corn-Law League; but that had nothing to do with the case, and he would, therefore, pass on to the hon. Gentleman's second offer. He said, if they would consent to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton's Motion, that they would not inflict upon them another debate upon that question. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that they did not look upon the prospect of another debate as an infliction, for there were a number of Gentlemen on that side of the House who were suffering very severely under suppressed speeches; and if the hon. Gentleman desired it, and would appoint Monday next, or any other day, to commence another discussion, he could with safety promise that there would be at least fifty Gentlemen who advocated protection ready to make speeches in favour of their views, varying in length from two hours to half an hour. The hon. Gentleman had stated that that was entirely a landlord's question. He denied that it was so; but, for the sake of argument, admitting that it was so, he wished to know if landlords had not an equal right to be heard as manufacturers, or any other body of people? He could not help smiling at the logic used by the right hon. Gentleman, when he said that in case that measure was then passed, it would finally settle the question of the Corn Laws; as if the people would thereby be deprived at the next general election from again agitating the question. That question, he said, must of all necessity be again tried at the ensuing election, and therefore could not be settled then. There was another reason which showed him that it could not be then settled, which was that the measure was likely to prove ruinous to not only the agricultural but to the mercantile interests of the country; which was a sufficient reason why, in his opinion, it should be tried again. With the permission of the House, he would tell them why that position, if carried, would prove ruinous to the country. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford had told them that their imports of foreign corn would be about 3,000,000 of quarters; but he could tell the right hon. Baronet, that that quantity of corn in particular seasons would be quite sufficient to glut their markets; and he was strongly of opinion that the hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House were discussing that question whilst labouring under great misapprehensions. He would refer to a report that had been prepared for that House in 1841, which showed the entire amount of

foreign grain that could be calculated upon for being imported into this country: by that return he found that Prussia, in 1838, exported to various ports of the world 4,000,000 quarters of wheat, and 4,000,000 quarters of other kinds of grain; and in 1840 that country exported 5,000,000 quarters of wheat, and 4,700,000 quarters of other kinds of grain; to which was to be added the 150,000,000 quarters of corn that America could furnish—so that the fair calculation of what might be expected to be sent to this country from all foreign countries, would be about 8,000,000 quarters of wheat, and 7,000,000 quarters of other descriptions of grain; for (as was well said by Lord Hardwicke) under such circumstances the ports of England would be made "the refuge for the destitute." He believed, from that view of the case, that from the glut which must take place in their markets from such an extensive importation, the result must be that ruin would stare them in the face. He understood that amongst the merchants at Liverpool, a few days since, when the result of the late division on the right hon. Baronet's measure was made known there, that some gentlemen threw up their hats with joy on hearing of the majority of the Ministers; in reference to which he considered that those gentlemen were greatly mistaken in their calculations as to the result of the contemplated benefits expected, in case the measure passed into law. It was his (Mr. Finch's) belief that America would in a few years be beaten by those countries near the Baltic in the production of corn, from the greater facilities which they possessed; and in case that should occur, it could not be denied but that the manufacturing interest of this country must be seriously injured. The disadvantage this country would labour under, in competing with the countries that did not accept reciprocal measures of free trade would be great; and Prussia would be delighted to hear of the passing of that measure, but at the same time would decline to respond to it, by adopting a similar one. In fact, the tariff of Prussia formed a part of the practical system by which the different States of that part of the world were joined in union: all the hopes, therefore, that had been formed in reference to the liberal conduct of Prussia, would be found to be altogether delusive. There had been another reason assigned by the right hon. Baronet for the continuance of the protection for three years, and that was the condition of Canada, which he believed was a sufficient reason for not hurrying the measure through the House. ["Hear."] He knew that they had had a long debate, in fact so long that he believed it was likely to reduce the price of opium. But, at the same time, considering the great interests at stake, he thought they were proceeding with indecent haste; as they had not had time to hear how the Canadians received the intimation of the proposed change, and he firmly believed, that they had been most shamefully treated by breaking those hopes that had been cherished by them for many years. Lord Stanley, when he introduced the Canada Corn Bill, gave an assurance to the people of Canada that the question of their corn trade was settled. But Ministers were now treating the Canadians with greater contumely and insult than they had the British agriculturists. What a moment too had been chosen, when the question of peace and war between Great Britain and America was hanging in the balance, for so insulting the Canadians. It would not be surprising if they should exhibit greater indignation than had been expressed by the farmers of this country. He conceived this measure had been hurried on too fast. He thought they should first of all have the financial statement laid before them. The rescinding of the malt tax was what the agriculturists had always relied upon, and what the language formerly held by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government naturally led them to expect. It was important that they should see from the financial statement, if a hope of such abolition could be entertained. He thought it could not. There would be great changes on the revenue. There was the 500,000*l.* proposed as a compensation to the agriculturists, 500,000*l.* additional to the navy estimates, at least 500,000*l.* more to the army estimates, about 500,000*l.* to the public works in Ireland, and there was 500,000*l.* more lost by the relaxations of the new Tariff. He very much suspected that in the next quarter's revenue there would not be a surplus of 2,500,000*l.* He thought, after all that had been said in praise of the financial skill of the right hon. Baronet, that there was every chance of a deficit in the revenue even with the Property-tax: before, the deficit was without it. Under these circumstances he thought, before the measure was passed, they should have a financial statement; and he saw no reason why the acid which had been stirred up in the debate should not be neutralized

by an early discussion of the sugar duties. Nothing would give him greater satisfaction than such a discussion; but at all events they ought to have the financial statement. Another reason for delay was the state of our relations with America. Would it not be most preposterous to have no protective duty on corn—a perfect free trade and war taxation? Open the ports for foreign produce, and make our own people pay heavily to support the expenses of a war! Why, in such an event they must put on a beer tax, a house tax, and a property tax. But they were to have free trade. Surely a wilder chimera never entered into the head of the merest tyro of a statesman. They ought to see whether there would be peace or war before they sanctioned a measure of this sort, which involved the social and commercial relations of the country to so large an extent. In the event of war, would not the Government be justly censurable for forcing on a measure like the present, which would cause disunion and create dissatisfaction—for breaking up a great party, and throwing the whole country into confusion? They would probably be obliged to retrace their steps, and transfer free trade for the next thirty years to the North Pole. They would be obliged to resume the old system. He disliked the measure in any shape, but preferred that of the right hon. Baronet to that of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton.

Mr. WARD said, not one syllable of the speech of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, with the exception of the last sentence, bore on the question before the House. This was particularly hard on the House. The hon. Gentleman had an opportunity of being heard in the course of the debate; but it would seem that he had then forgotten one-half of his arguments, which occurred to him afterwards, and that he took this opportunity of inflicting the forgotten half upon the House. Some of the hon. Gentleman's commercial principles were so untenable and so unsound, that it was impossible to avoid giving them a reply; but, in referring to them, he should abstain as much as possible from going at present into any other part of the subject. When the hon. Gentleman talked of the repeal of the malt tax as a boon to the agricultural interest, let it be recollected that ninety-nine parts of a hundred of that tax were paid by the consumer at present. But if they repealed the malt tax, they must substitute a property tax; and let them recollect how much of that would go out of the pocket of the farmers. Yet that was one of the boons that the farmers' friends wished to confer on them. There was a proverb, "God preserve me from my friends!" and it might be said by the farmers, "God preserve us from the friendship of the hon. Gentlemen who talk of the repeal of the malt tax as a boon to us!" The hon. Gentleman had said that this Parliament was utterly incompetent to decide this question. Now, what the Reform Bill did for the rotten boroughs, the present measure would do for the Corn Laws. There was, however, this difference between them: for six years this question had been discussed; now, facts were every day forcing themselves upon the common sense of both sides of the House, calling on Parliament to legislate on this subject. He would now come to the question of his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers), and he would confess that he never gave a vote on any subject with more difficulty and doubt than he felt on this subject. He entirely concurred in every word of the wise and statesmanlike speech that was delivered on the preceding night by his noble Friend the Member for London (Lord John Russell). If he (Mr. Ward) thought that his vote would endanger the present Bill, or that by giving it he would run any risk of depriving the country of the great benefit which had been placed within its reach by the measure of the Government, he would not vote for his hon. Friend's Amendment. He told him, in the first instance, if the right hon. Baronet said he would be no longer responsible for the success of the measure if an Amendment of this sort for immediate repeal were carried, he (Mr. Ward) would, for one, take the measure of the Government. He had no sort of influence pressing on him from outside; for his constituents were satisfied with the measure which the Government had proposed, and were anxious to see it carried out. But he formed his opinion solely on grounds that had presented themselves to him in that House. If he saw on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite the slightest disposition to meet on a middle ground, and not to carry on the most factious opposition that he ever had seen during his experience in that House—if he saw any intention on their part to regard the decision of the other night as a final decision on this subject—then he would say he would give the measure of the Government all the support he could. But when he looked to

the conduct of the hon. Members opposite, he found a justification for voting for the Amendment of his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers); for he saw they looked upon the decision of the House as nothing, and that they would be satisfied with nothing less than a fresh appeal to the constituencies. Had those who concurred with his hon. Friend any right to abandon one hair's-breadth of the position they now occupied, when such extreme opinions were urged by Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House? When they said that for three years this was to be the constant theme of agitation, and that nothing but an appeal to the constituencies would satisfy them, those who concurred with his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers) were bound to keep the ground they had at present. And though his (Mr. Ward's) noble Friend the Member for London, acting on a high and honourable feeling, felt himself bound, after what had passed with an august Personage, to take the Government measure in preference to any other; he held that, as an independent Member of that House, who concurred with the Anti-Corn-Law League, and thought they had done inestimable service to the country, he was equally bound to follow his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers) in the course he proposed of making the repeal immediate. He did not pass the whole week in that House. He passed two days of the week in a less heated atmosphere than he breathed there. He mixed with men in the country who had nothing to do with their party questions; and he could say that the tenant-farmers in many parts of England—men who differed from him for the last ten years on this question of protection—were now all rejoicing at the largeness of the majority by which the question was decided; for they said they hoped this would settle it. They said they trusted they should not have an agitation kept up for three years, and not have to endure protracted uncertainty; that they wished to look, not to a dissolution or to a new battle to be fought, but to Michaelmas next, like practical sober men as they are, to enter into new arrangements with their landlords to meet the new state of things that had arisen from the proceedings in that House. That was the general feeling that prevailed through the country, amongst men who were not tainted by the atmosphere they breathed in that House, who did not spend their time in clubs discussing those questions, or in ransacking *Hansard* for quotations from speeches, to prove a thing that was admitted, that the opinions of public men on the Corn Laws had undergone a change. He believed if hon. Members opposite would express their real opinions, that they would be found to correspond, to a great extent, with the tenant-farmers' views. He believed that in private they all agreed with the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles), that "they had better have free trade at once." ["No, no."] Yes, he believed that was their real opinion; though, as they were now getting heated in the fray, and becoming a mere factious opposition, they find it convenient to have short memories, and not to recollect the views they entertained, and the opinions they expressed, no longer than six weeks ago. To his mind it was clear, that if they consulted their own interest—if they got rid of their odious party feelings, and looked at the question in a plain, practical point of view—they would see that they could scarcely do themselves or their cause a worse service than by keeping the question open. It was essential to their tenantry that they should not discourage them in their efforts. But what was the tendency of their speeches? They were literally cutting their own throats. If the result proved that the free traders were right and the protectionists wrong, those very speeches would be the best weapons that the tenants could use against their landlords. When they came to arrange their rents, these "good fellows" would say, "You have told us that we have no chance against the Russians and the Poles—that the fat soils they cultivate, and which you have so unctiously described, will produce quantities of grain which we can never hope to grow—therefore, in consistency, you cannot expect us to pay the same rents as when we were free from so unfair a competition." That was the way the farmer would meet them if they persisted in their present course. As it was, he (Mr. Ward) believed that all that was desired was a decision. The farmers were not alarmed, "Settle the question," they said, "settle it at once, and we can be at no loss about our future proceedings and arrangements." They saw that new facts had been elicited—they saw that a change of opinions had occurred—they regretted, possibly, that difficulties had been raised to an equitable settlement five years ago—they regretted that Sir Robert Peel had not, like Lord John Russell, looked forwards; but they were content to let bygones be by-

gones, provided there was no opportunity for the future—no repetition of the scene of 1842, when a measure was proposed as a "settlement," which was never intended to be a "settlement" at all. Believing that a settlement—a final settlement—was on all hands desired now, he (Mr. Ward) should give his vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. In doing so, he had no desire to risk the success of this great measure, and he had no idea that he was doing so. He believed, indeed, whatever might be said here or in another place, that the measure would give greater satisfaction if this Amendment were grafted on it, and, holding that view, he should give it his support.

Mr. LIDDELL could not place much confidence in the statements of the hon. Member who had just sat down respecting the opinions of the farmers, particularly when he recollected what the preconceived and long avowed sentiments of the hon. Member were on this question. The question which the House had to decide was, whether they would accept the modified proposal of the Government, or consent to a total and immediate repeal. It was very well for hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, whose opinions on the Corn Laws were well known, to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton; but he thought that hon. Member could only ask the support of hon. Members on that side of the House on two grounds: first, upon the ground of the necessity of an immediate supply of cheap food as regarded Ireland; and, secondly, considering the state of the corn markets in the whole universe at present—considering that no superfluity of corn existed anywhere, and that from the failure of the potato crop in other parts of the world, the prices of the continental markets were much more nearly on an equality with the markets of this country than they would probably be at the expiration of three years—taking into account these facts, the question was, whether it would not be more to the advantage of the agriculturists to have a total and immediate repeal rather than postponement? As regarded the first ground, the question of impending famine to Ireland, he was one of those who certainly would not have condemned the Government for opening the ports on their own responsibility, if they apprehended a famine there. But the Government had taken a different view of the subject. They were not now called on to consider the question of suspension of the law, nor the expediency of providing against impending famine in Ireland; for the Government had not pursued the former course, and they had taken upon themselves the task of providing against a scarcity in Ireland by the introduction of Bills for the execution of public works, and by purchasing a quantity of corn. As to the second point, a general deficiency in the continental markets, and the equalization of the price of these markets with our own, we should perhaps, considering this argument *per se*, be induced to accede to it; but there were other things which must be considered. The prices of foreign corn upon average years must be taken into account. He had lately received some information on this point, which he would read to the House; it was from an authority which might be relied upon. He held in his hand a return of the sales of wheat in bond in 1835 by the house of Taylor, Clifford, and Co., corn merchants in Hull. He had seen the whole list of sales effected in every month of 1835, and the prices at which those sales took place. The wheat, he had been assured, was of average quality, weighing sixty pounds per bushel—it was much about the same quality of corn as that grown in Yorkshire. He would give the House the result. The sales in bond took place at between 15*s.* and 22*s.* per quarter; and the quantity sold in the port of Hull, in bond, in that year, 1835, was 14,656 quarters of wheat, at prices varying from 15*s.* to 22*s.* In the year 1836, the amount sold by the same houses in the same port was 18,068 quarters, of which the price varied between 42*s.* and 20*s.* a quarter, the average price of the whole being 28*s.* 8*d.* [Mr. Hutt: What was the duty?] It was not a question of duty, but of the price of the corn as bought and sold in bond. He did not say that those sales had been effected in the markets of this country, but had been effected in bond. There was another circumstance which he thought ought to be considered before they consented to the present Motion, viz., that as much wheat as they liked would be brought from Bremen to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, at the rate of 1*s.* a quarter, being a much lower cost of freight than it could be carried for from Newcastle to Sunderland. ["No, no!"] But he (Mr. Liddell) said yes, yes: he was certain the fact was true, from the source whence he derived it. It was conveyed at a much lower rate from Bremen to New-

castle, because a cargo of coals was taken back. He did not mean to draw any important consequences from these facts, but merely stated them as facts to show that if wheat could be sold at the prices he had quoted, and if it could be brought from the Baltic at so cheap a rate, it was but right and proper on the part of Her Majesty's Government to afford a moderate protection for three years, in order that some experience might be gained by the landowners, and that in accordance with that experience they might make arrangements with their tenants befitting the nature of the crisis. Upon these grounds he should oppose the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton.

Mr. HUTT wished to correct an error into which his hon. Friend had fallen, in supposing that corn from Bremen was corn from the Baltic; Bremen being on the Weser, which fell into the North Sea or German Ocean. He could account for the cheapness of freight in the instance alluded to, by informing his hon. Friend that the ship which carried the wheat was engaged upon a voyage of discovery, and was ready to take any cargo offered; and as regarded the low prices at which wheat had been sold at Hull, it was not so surprising as the statement made that evening by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, that a quantity of wheat had been actually destroyed in the Severn, on account of the high rate of duty, which made it not worth the importer's while to free it. In 1836, wheat in this country was selling so low as 32*s.* a quarter; and under these circumstances it was not very surprising that foreign wheat in bond should be sold at Hull at 28*s.* a quarter. He must therefore congratulate his hon. Friend in having discovered a mare's nest.

Mr. BORTHWICK wished, in the first place, to say a word upon the adjournment last night. Hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House had been called factious. Hon. Gentlemen complained of these protracted debates, and stated that commerce and agriculture were suffering alike under these protracted discussions. Now, he would ask the House, and he would ask Her Majesty's Government, to whom was the country indebted for these protracted discussions? In October, 1845, it was acknowledged on all hands that the country was quiet—that the Exchequer was overflowing—that trade was prosperous—that the labourers were employed; in short, that there was no aspect in which we could regard the country in which it did not present a satisfactory appearance. But in that month an influential organ of public opinion communicated to the country the startling intelligence that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government, in the second week of January in this present year, to propose a repeal of the Corn Laws. He would ask any man in the House whether it were not true, that from that moment up to the present time, both the commerce and the agriculture of the country had been paralysed? He would ask them whether they did not believe that if Her Majesty's Government, instead of rectifying, had falsified that prediction, while they took all necessary precautions to meet the apprehended famine in Ireland — whether this country would not have been as prosperous in March, 1846, as it was in October, 1845? He would, therefore, put the question to the House, whether it was not true that Her Majesty's Ministers were the cause of the present prostration of commerce, and not his hon. Friends near him, who stood upon the ground which Her Majesty's Ministers were wont to occupy, and who resisted the innovation—the revolutionary innovation—which Her Majesty's Ministers proposed. There was another ground on which this debate ought to be continued, and it was this—that they lived in a time of great changes. They had read in ancient history —["Oh, oh!"]—some hon. Gentlemen opposite might not be very profound in ancient history. They had already had some curious specimens of geography, but even some of those who were not profoundly versed in ancient history, might yet be old enough to remember the fact which he was about to state. They might remember to have read, and some of them to have heard, of a distinguished English statesman, who for years had occupied a high position in the affairs of this country, and in the confidence of his Sovereign — a statesman who was supported by nearly the largest majority that ever was assembled within those walls—who said, "On account of three years' experience, and on account of the potato-rot in Ireland, I have changed my opinions; and, with that one sentence, I dispose of all my former speeches." Now, if such changes had taken place within the last four months, perhaps if they continued the debate for four nights longer, they might see the same distinguished authority rise in his place, and say, "The potato-rot has

stopped now; the noble Lord the Member for Lynn has brought us information which completely contradicts all that we heard from our emissaries, and from the learned doctors whom we sent over to investigate the condition of the potato." He found that in the peroration of the eloquent speech of the right hon. Baronet, England was described as favourably situated for the adoption of the principles of free trade in a geographical point of view. It was within eleven days' rail of St. Petersburgh on the one hand, and within eleven days' rail of New York, on the other. The right hon. Baronet did not tell them whether it was through his three years' experience on the potato-rot in Ireland that he had discovered this geographical position of England; but as they had proved already that a town had changed its position from one river to another, which again changed its course from one sea into another, he had referred to his map to find whether or not England had changed. He found that she had maintained the same position for the last three hundred years; but in these days of frequent changes, no one knew how soon she might change her position. Another reason why he wanted the debate to be continued was, that he wanted to hear more speeches from the right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury bench, because he must say he had never had the good fortune to hear speeches which were better calculated to support the arguments of hon. Gentlemen near him. The right hon. Gentleman had opened the debate by telling them that the country was in a state of unexampled prosperity, and he gave that as a reason why they should adopt these changes. But, at the conclusion of his speech, in that awfully eloquent peroration of his, he told them of two figures he saw at a distance—two spectral associations of famine and of pestilence in the rear of famine, which, in the course of the next three months, he expected to visit Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman was asked by the noble Lord the Member for Newark, "Why then don't you open the ports to relieve the necessities of Ireland?" But that question was answered by the right hon. the Secretary at War, who said, "I should like to know if any Member of this House will point to me the country from which corn is to come." But if there is no country from which corn is to come, where is the benefit to Ireland in the meantime, or to England in the long run, from this relaxation of duties? The question before the House was narrowed very much indeed. It was, whether they should adopt a total repeal of the Corn Laws at the end of three years, or whether they should adopt it to-night. The noble Lord the Member for London had relieved him from much of the difficulty he felt in giving his opinion on this question. The noble Lord told them that though, in the abstract, he agreed with the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, yet, in practice, he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, because, if the Amendment were carried, the measure might leave the door of this House, but it would never get any further. Now, he and his hon. Friends did not understand these shiftings and changes. They maintained the broad and intelligible principle of protection, not only to corn, but to every species of native industry. The fallacy which had run through the whole of these debates was, that hon. Gentlemen opposite assumed there was some species of hostility between agriculture and commerce. Now, he contended that there was no competition between corn and the cotton mills; but that, on the contrary, the prosperity of one was the prosperity of the other. The land did not compete with the cotton mill, but it did compete with the land abroad; and, therefore, it was idle to say that land was more lightly burdened than manufactures. What hon. Gentlemen ought to know was, that land in this country was more lightly burdened than land abroad. The hon. Member for Stockport had advised them the other night to read the learned doctors who treated on political economy. Well, he would ask if there was a single authority among these writers who argued for free trade. He would take only one authority, Mr. M'Culloch. Mr. M'Culloch says (in his work on Taxation, published only last year)—

"The serious inroad made by taxation on the produce of the land and labour of the country may be further illustrated, by comparing it with the produce either of agricultural or manufacturing industry. Without pretending to minute accuracy, which, on such subjects, is unattainable, the quantity and value of the corn annually grown in England, may be estimated as under:—

Wheat, 14,000,000 quarter at 50*s.* ..	£35,000,000
Barley, 5,000,000 ditto at 30*s.*	7,500,000
Oats, peas, and beans, 12,000,000 ditto at 25*s.*	16,000,000
	£58,500,000

We incline to think that this estimate is near the mark, at all events it is underrated; and, supposing it to be about accurate, it shows that the value of the share of the produce of the land and labour

of the United Kingdom, taken as taxes, is considerably more than the whole value of all the wheat and barley annually produced in England."

How then, he would ask, would this country compete with other countries when its taxation was so enormous? He knew he should be told what was true in the abstract must be right in practice. But every day's experience seemed to show how very shallow was this maxim: common liberty was a principle abstractedly true; and yet they found that in practice restraints were put upon human liberty from infancy to old age. What could be more true than those abstract dogmas, the practical effects of which, in a neighbouring country, were, that revolution had rolled her chariot wheels in tracks of blood over every shape of human right and every condition of human liberty; and yet, what could be more true than this dogma, that all men were born equal? There never was a grosser insult offered to the doctrine even which they advocated, than to assert that free trade could be carried out in a country situated as England was, and situated as the countries on the European Continent were at the present moment. The right hon. Baronet had asked who would undertake to close the ports again if they were opened in the present exigency of Ireland? Now, if the right hon. Baronet meant that the ports once being opened, public opinion would be so strongly declared in favour of their remaining open that it would not be safe to shut them again; his answer was this—that, much as he respected the eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues, he would rather be convinced by one year's practical experience of the working of this measure, than by all the abstract arguments which they had brought forward. Indeed, he could not help thinking that the right hon. Baronet had some misgivings as to the effects of this measure, for he did not think it safe to trust to the practical experience of the country; but he trusted rather to abstract opinions urged with his accustomed eloquence upon the House. He apologized for detaining the House, whose kindness he certainly was not justified in trespassing upon further; but as hon. Gentlemen on his side had been challenged to the proof, he was ready to show that there was not a writer in favour of free trade of any name whatever. The hon. Member for Stockport had sent him to his studies: he told them that political economy was a better study than the exact sciences. Forsaking, therefore, the negative roots of impossible quantities, he had gone into his library—he had studied the political economists, and there was not one of them who did not agree with the noble Lord the Member for London, that, for the benefit of all classes in the country, it was necessary to give a preponderating influence to the affairs of land. Dr. Johnson, who was not a free trader, but whose views were corroborated by all political economists, said—

"Commerce, however we may please ourselves with the contrary opinion, is one of the daughters of Fortune, inconstant and deceitful as her mother. She chooses her residence where she is at least expected, and shifts her abode when her continuance is, in appearance, most firmly settled. Who can read the present distresses of the Genoese, whose only choice now remaining is from what monarch they shall solicit protection?—who can see the Hanseatic towns in ruins, where perhaps the inhabitants do not always equal the number of the houses; but he will say to himself, these are the cities whose trade enabled them once to give laws to the world—to whose merchants princes sent their jewels in pawn, from whose treasuries armies were paid and navies supplied? And who can then forbear to consider trade as a weak and uncertain basis of power, and to wish for his own country greatness more solid, and felicity more durable?"

He adds, in another place—

"By agriculture only can commerce be perpetuated, and by agriculture alone can we live in plenty without intercourse with other nations. This, therefore, is the great art which every government ought to protect, every proprietor of lands to practise, and every inquirer into nature to improve."

This was a broad, statesmanlike, round, and intelligible principle. Now, that they could improve agriculture by protection, he called into court the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government; for a great portion of his speech was occupied in proving that from 1804 down to the present time, under a system of protection, the amount of wheat had increased, while the price of wheat had decreased; and although the right hon. Baronet drew different inferences from these facts in 1841 and 1846, yet he could not but draw from the facts this conclusion, that protection had fostered commerce—that coincidently with protection agriculture had flourished; and, therefore, he wished to be informed on what principle it was that the right hon. Gentleman now proposed that the House should abandon the policy to which he stood pledged, and should adopt a new course? He confessed that he was totally incapable of seeing any grounds for such a change. He was not prepared to go so far as some hon. Gentlemen. He was not

prepared to say, that at no period might the present Corn Laws be modified. It was protection he contended for—not any special form of protection—neither for a sliding-scale in preference to a fixed duty, nor the reverse; nor would he deny that by some reduction of taxation, it might be possible to diminish the duties on corn. But what he said was, that the plan of the right hon. Gentleman provided him with no such advantages. He did not find in it any compensation for the injuries it would inflict upon land. He saw in it an immediate reduction of one important article—the tithe of the Church; for it was impossible the present amount of tithe could be maintained, whether the proposed law worked well or ill. He assumed that the price of wheat must be reduced, or the law would fail of accomplishing its own purpose. If the price of food was not lowered, how was it to benefit the condition of the labourers in Ireland and England? He hoped he had now shown why, on this question, he was prepared to vote with the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government—not because he approved of their scheme in contradistinction to the existing law, but because he agreed with them in thinking that the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was dangerous and mischievous to the best interests of the country. One word as to the question put by the right hon. Gentleman—why some of his Friends had said, and all had cheered the saying, that they would prefer immediate repeal to repeal at the end of three years. Now, their meaning was this, if they had no choice at all as between the one proposal and the other, they would of the two prefer total repeal immediately to total repeal at the end of three years. But he contended that they had another choice—that in the present age of changes, the opinion of Parliament might again turn in favour of protection; and, therefore, they preferred to take the advantage of the three years which the right hon. Baronet by his measure allowed them.

Mr. HUME must say a few words in reply to the hon. Member who had just sat down. The hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Bright) had congratulated himself that protection was dead and buried; but it seemed to have risen again, not exactly like a giant refreshed, in the person of the hon. Member for Evesham. That hon. Member, amongst many other curious observations, had said that not one of the writers upon political economy had written upon the policy of the right hon. Baronet. How the deuce could they write upon it? The right hon. Baronet, much to his satisfaction, had come forward with a most comprehensive plan; and he did not at all wonder that the hon. Member had not been able to find in his library any authority upon the subject. Protection, said the hon. Member, was considered robbery by no one. He asserted that protection was robbery; and that the landed interest would never have been able to have imposed additional and unnatural prices upon the food of all the other classes in the State, if the House of Commons had not formerly been composed of landed proprietors. Until a few years ago no individual could sit in that House unless he had a qualification in land; and it was not to be wondered at that agricultural proprietors should have established the doctrine when the power was exclusively in their own hands. This, however, was not the question. The question was, whether the laws of this country should be equal, and whether there was any justice in permitting one class—those who possessed the land—to tax all the other classes? This was the effect of protection; and therefore he denied the justice of protection. The object of the right hon. Baronet's policy was to remove this injustice, and to give to all classes equal rights with regard to food. This measure would not lower prices, but it would equalise them all over Europe. Ninety years ago, when the ports of Holland were free, the average price of wheat was upwards of 47*s.* 6*d.*, from which there was not much, if any, variation in England. He had a right to expect that as improvements took place, prices throughout the world would be cheaper; and why should not England be placed in the same situation? He did not believe they would fall more in England than elsewhere, and he was certain we should have our food at the same prices as other countries. And why should we not? Was it just to see every year fifty millions of exports, created by our artisans, and those artisans obliged to pay higher prices for their provisions than those of any other country in the world whose products came into competition with theirs in foreign markets? The artisans of England, of France, of Belgium, and of America, would, by this measure, be placed as nearly as possible upon the same footing as regarded food. The labour of our workmen, therefore, would find its reward in neutral markets: thus

the country would be benefited, whilst our artisans would not suffer from inequalities in the price of food. The late debate had exhibited, as it appeared to him, an amount of selfishness which he did not suppose to exist among Gentlemen on the opposite benches. The House had heard of nothing from them but an anxiety for the landed interest, as if they paid all the taxes necessary for the support of Government; whilst they paid only a fraction. But he would ask whether it was becoming in them to wish to put their hands into the pockets of every other class? which he contended they did. He might be told that this was an unfair statement; but he was prepared to support it. The Income Tax of five millions annually was assessed upon 200 millions of property. Of those 200 millions, the whole land of England was assessed at only thirty-two millions, manufactures at forty-one millions, and trade at fifty millions. Yet, although the land was assessed at less than trade or manufactures, the claim was made that all the other interests should pay to it a higher price for their food. He would now come to the immediate question, and to how he should vote this evening. He looked upon the measure of the right hon. Baronet as a comprehensive scheme. It was not confined to corn, but it embraced the whole Tariff, except a few articles. It was a greater, more extensive, and more useful scheme than he had anticipated; and he was not willing to risk, in any way, its failure. He had, therefore, determined to vote with the right hon. Baronet, whose measure he would take now, and see how much more he could get afterwards. He advised his hon. Friends near him to adopt the language which was used when the Reform Bill was before that House, and take the measure, the whole measure, and nothing but the measure. He was sorry he could not on this occasion vote for the Amendment; but he should not be considered the less a free trader, for he had supported every proposition made for the abolition of the Corn Laws. He still believed also that total and immediate repeal would be the best course in every way; but fearing that any attempt at interference might risk the whole arrangement, he should give his support to the measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet.

LORD G. BENTINCK: The hon. Gentleman has said that we are a selfish party, and that we cannot be content with our fair share of the government of the country. If we had but our fair share of the government of the country, I think there would be very little doubt how the measure now under discussion would go in this House. But if the hon. Gentleman means to say that we are not only not content with having our fair share of the government of the country, but that we are not content to bear our fair share of the burdens of the country, then I beg leave to tell him that I differ from him altogether in the view which he takes. I think it might be easily shown that so far from not bearing a fair share in the taxes of the country, the landed interests bear a much larger share than other interests. The hon. Gentleman says the landed interest is assessed at 32,000,000*l.* I believe it is assessed at 37,000,000*l.* But taking it at 32,000,000*l.* it is so much the better for my argument. The landed interest pays 52-100ths of all the poor's rates; while the whole of their income is assessed at 70,000,000*l.* a year. The other 135,000,000*l.* pay but 48-100ths of the poor's rates. The landed interests are only assessed at 32,000,000*l.*, and they pay 52-100ths of the poor's rates, which amounts to 7,000,000*l.* a year. I do not think, then, the hon. Gentleman has shown by his speech to-night, that he is correct in the assertion, that we wished to relieve ourselves from our share of the burdens of the country. With respect to the Motion before the House—whether it should consent to an immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, or accept the measure of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government, I take leave to say, that my Friends here have been much misapprehended in what has been stated by them on this subject. It has been alleged that my hon. Friend, who is absent to-night, stated, in behalf of the agricultural interest, that the farmers of England would prefer to have immediate repeal, to a repeal hanging over them for three years. In that the hon. Gentleman is correct; but the reason of our preference for the Bill to immediate repeal is, that we do not consider it quite certain that, at the end of three years, the Corn Laws will be repealed. Though we may have met with a heavy blow and great discouragement in the desertion of our leaders, we have been told by the noble Lord the Member for the city of London, that if he had accepted the Government he would have been in a minority; and I can assure my noble Friend, that I cordially concur with him in that sentiment. I was in London during the short interregnum that

followed the right hon. Baronet's resignation, and was frequenting the clubs; and I must say, that so far as I could judge from the sentiments of many Gentlemen who will vote differently now, I do not think my noble Friend would have had much of their support. If that be so, is it not a proof that it is not the minds of hon. Gentlemen that are changed—it is not exactly their opinions that are changed; and, perhaps, if we go to the country now, we shall find that the country will return Gentlemen holding the same sentiments as those elected in 1841, when Her Majesty appealed to the country. We have, it is true, received a check—we have been repulsed for a moment—but we do not think ourselves half beaten yet. Napoleon said, the English army never knew when they were beaten, and I trust we shall find the same result in this case. It may be through ignorance on our part; but still we mean to fight the battle from pillar to post. We will not be defeated to-night because we join with Her Majesty's Ministers and also with many of my noble Friends and right hon. Friends opposite. To-night, then, we shall be in a majority. But, if eventually we shall be defeated in this House, as we were on Saturday morning last, we will retreat and rally our forces, and will give our opponents battle again before the country. I think before we have done, we shall drive Her Majesty's Ministers to have recourse again to the opinions of Her Majesty's people. We shall not despair of eventual success; and that is the reason why, in perfect consistency with the opinions of the farmers and landed interest of England, we think it is better to vote for repeal at the end of three years, than immediate repeal. We prefer to postpone that day, because we know that in the interval we must be returned to the people, and then we hope to be able to restore things to what they were before. Sir, I am too grateful for the attention and indulgence I received the other night from the House to go at any length into the question this night; but with respect to the prices of corn quoted to-night by some of my hon. Friends, and doubted at the other side of the House, I must take leave to say, that I shall now quote from an authority which I think cannot be impugned. I shall quote from Mr. Porter's Tables, which have been originally derived from the *Prussian Royal Gazette*. I find from that authority that during the eighteen years from 1820 to 1837 inclusive, the average price of corn in the ports of Russia, including Dantzic and Konigsberg, was 25*s*. 4*d*. Now, taking all the expenses to the port of London at 6*s*. more, you will then have the price at 31*s*. 4*d*. That is the price at which corn can be sold in the port of London. But in the course of that long period, there were five years consecutively from 1833 to 1837, when the average price of corn was 23*s*.; and five other years, from 1823 to 1827, when the average price of corn was 20*s*. 1*d*. There are, besides, other ports at which it is sixpence a quarter cheaper. It is clear, then, from these returns, there will be little doubt that we shall have wheat in the port of London at a very low price when the Corn Laws are repealed. I have also in my hand other communications — one especially from a constituent of my hon. Friend, one of the Members for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Mr. Beckett Denison), a Mr. Taylor, who has been forty years in the corn trade. I have no acquaintance with the gentleman; but I am sure my hon. Friend can vouch for his respectability. He has voluntarily written to me, and states that he has been forty years in the corn trade; and, during that time, has purchased beans at Hamburgh at from 10*s*. 6*d*. to 11*s*. a quarter; oats from 7*s*. 6*d*. to 8*s*., and wheat from 18*s*. to 23*s*. per quarter. I may say that this gentleman adds, or rather he commences his letter by saying, that he has read what I had said upon the subject, and continues in these words—"Your Lordship is quite correct. The difference in the duty now payable by law and the duty proposed will be pocketed by the holders of foreign corn." I have another statement in confirmation. I have a letter from a gentleman named Bouker, who has also been forty years in the corn trade, and he writes that, in 1826, he purchased large quantities, to the extent of several thousand quarters of red wheat, as fine as any that could be grown, at prices varying from 18*s*. to 21*s*.; and that then freight to London amounted to 3*s*. 6*d*. Now, if we take the highest, 21*s*., and add 3*s*. 6*d*. for freight, it will make 24*s*. 6*d*., and still allow him a reasonable profit. Thus it will be clear—too clear—to the farmers of England at what sort of price foreign corn can be brought into the market to compete with theirs. I have another letter from a firm in Norfolk, who state that they have purchased within the last year 807 quarters of wheat at Hamburgh, and that they had the offer of 3,000 quarters at the same price; but that they only purchased 807.

The price of this wheat, free on board, in June last was 26*s.* 4*d.*, and the expense to the port of London, including freight, lighterage, port dues, and all other small incidental expenses, amounted to 6*s.* more. Six shillings more and 26*s.* 4*d.* make 32*s.* 4*d.*, and that was the price paid in June last for wheat weighing 62 lbs. the bushel, and imported by this firm and sent to London for sale. I now beg leave to inform the House that a considerable portion of this wheat is at present in bond; and if Gentlemen will add the existing duty of 17*s.* to the cost of that corn at Mark Lane, they will find that the importer can afford to pay 17*s.* duty and clear 14*s.* profit beside. ["No, no."] I have given hon. Gentlemen the figures. I hope they will take them down, and I challenge any hon. Member who cries "No, no," to disprove my assertion, that the importers of the 807 quarters of wheat will make less than 14*s.* profit after paying the present duty of 17*s.* Well, then, is not that a proof that in the measure about to be introduced by Her Majesty's Ministers, who think so much of the taxes upon the people —who pretend to say they could not think even if Ireland was starving, of coming to this House, and asking the House to pay 17*s.* a quarter for their wheat—is it not, I ask, clear to whom they will make a present of the difference between 4*s.* and 17*s.* I will not detain the House with reference to the speech made by the hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Bright); but he has been pleased to make a little diversion, and recited a portion of the evidence which has been given before a Committee of this House with respect to the damage done by game on the Duke of Rutland's estate. It is right I should say the witness in question was a Quaker. I assure hon. Gentlemen I feel no disrespect for the order of Quakers; on the contrary, I entertain a high respect for them; but it so happens this gentleman carried his aversion to bloodshed even further than the gentlemen at Reading, who presented a petition last night in opposition to the vote of thanks passed to the British army for their services in India. This witness was a respectable and excellent man; but he carried his prejudice to such an extent, that though he admitted the Duke of Rutland was an excellent and kind man—that he would not allow a poor man on his estate to want—that he was a nobleman who could not find it in his heart to turn out a farmer from his occupation, although he was a bad farmer, whose ancestors had been long upon his estate; but still this excellent Quaker had such an aversion to bloodshed, that he could not for his life understand how the Duke of Rutland could possibly take delight in spilling the blood of partridges and pheasants. And such was his prejudice, that when it became a question of damage done by game, he really could see nothing in its true light, and went the length of telling us the damage by game, even to meadow land, was at the rate of 30*s.* per acre; and when I took the liberty of cross-examining him, I ascertained the land was let at 25*s.* I should wish to set the hon. Member right with respect to the great damage done by game at the expense of the Duke of Rutland. I suppose the hon. Gentleman's argument is that, if game is destroyed we can afford to have free trade. I can assure the hon. Gentleman, on the authority of my two noble Friends behind me, sons of the Duke of Rutland (the Marquess of Granby and Lord John Manners) that having been deceived by the particular view of the gentleman to whom he (Lord G. Bentinck) had adverted, the noble Duke employed other valuers, and instead of the loss being 954*l.* in 1833, and 951*l.* in 1844, the new valuers valued at somewhere below 200*l.* and 300*l.* I trust now, Sir, I have answered the observations of my fellow-labourer the hon. Gentleman the Member for Durham. I beg to thank the House for the patience with which it has listened to me.

MR. COBDEN said, one part of the speech of the noble Lord who had just sat down went to show how very cheap they might get corn in this country if they allowed it to come in duty free. The other part was in reference to the proceedings of a Committee which had not yet reported to that House. He would not dwell upon the admissions of the noble Lord, or upon the great defeat which the principles he advocated had experienced, further than to say that this was a subject of great exultation to the people of this country, mingled with some little indignation at the immense injustice which had been practised upon them for so many years. But the noble Lord had given us 31*s.* 2*d.* as the price at which he was going to supply us with bread. But he was underbid. The hon. Member for Sunderland had offered us bread at 25*s.*, and while the people could deal with that hon. Member, they would not go to the noble Lord's shop. The question before the House

was a very narrow one. He would not deviate from its discussion. The question was this—whether the Corn Law was to be immediately abolished, or to be abolished in three years? He would say, in reference to the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), that he thought it was unfortunate that it was brought forward at this moment; but he believed there was no other way consistently with the forms of the House in which it could be brought forward. If this discussion could have come on at a later period, when the temper of the House was in a fitter state for a calm deliberation of the question; and when the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway should have become reconciled to the passing of the right hon. Baronet's proposition (which it inevitably would be), he thought it might have been differently entertained: because he had heard no argument in favour of delaying the repeal from any man of authority, from any statesman, politician, or farmer's friend. On the contrary, he would reiterate what had been said. The hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) distinctly asserted in the name of the agriculturists—["Oh! oh!" *from the Protectionists*]—yes, he made the distinct asseveration, and pledged himself seriously to the truth of it, and while doing so he was unanimously cheered by the Gentlemen behind him, that if the question was between delayed repeal or immediate repeal, he would prefer the latter. The Duke of Richmond said the same thing in another place. He had not heard any Gentleman venture to say that the farmers were of opinion that they would prefer a delayed repeal. He challenged any one to say that they would. He believed that if there was anything upon which they entertained a unanimous feeling, it was in favour of immediate repeal, as contradistinguished from delayed repeal. He would not include the land agents. Most of the protectionist speakers were land agents. ["No, no!"] He would repeat the statement. He had been amongst them in every county in the kingdom; and he had challenged them at their meetings, "Are you not a land agent?" and the burst of laughter that followed confirmed the question. The land agents, and the solicitors and surveyors, were all interested in promoting the causes of removals, changes, failures, and embarrassments among the farmers. But he would challenge any one to get up and say that the farmer would prefer this delayed repeal to immediate repeal. What were the grounds put forward in favour of delay? It was that this question was not to be settled by the division which might be come to now. It had been said by a noble Lord that this battle was not to be decided by a decision of the House of Commons. The noble Lord told the House that Napoleon once said that the English did not know when they were beaten; he begged to remind the noble Lord that he was not now speaking to Frenchmen but to Englishmen. But all this was in his (Mr. Cobden's) opinion a very strong justification of the Motion of his hon. Friend; for what was the object of that Motion? It was that they (the opponents of the Corn Laws) might occupy the same position, that impregnable position in the country, by which they had been enabled to beat, and should continue to be able to beat, the noble Lord and those who thought with him. His hon. Friend the Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), had chided him and his Friends for bringing forward this Motion—a Motion involving a question which he (Mr. Cobden) believed to be the very bond of union amongst the friends of free trade. He was at all times prepared to listen to everything which might fall from his hon. Friend. He was entitled to their respectful attention; for no one had ever taken a greater part in the advocacy of the principles of free trade, and that at a period when they were very differently received from what they were now. He, for one, would never rob his hon. Friend of the laurels which he had justly won. But he would ask his hon. Friend, whether this question of free trade would ever have occupied the position it now did in that House, if it had not been for the organization out of doors? The right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) must have too keen a recollection of those most unseemly sounds which used to break upon his ear, when he dared to mention corn, or the Corn Law, fifteen years ago. It was only since this organization had taken place that the question of the Corn Laws had ever had a fair hearing in that House. If then they, the advocates of repeal, were to depart from their position; if such a thing could arise as that they should be disbanded and dispersed out of doors; if public opinion on this great question should be withdrawn, he would ask whether it was likely any free-trade measure could be carried even now? Therefore, his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers) was entitled to the thanks of

the friends of free trade, for having brought forward this Amendment. His hon. Friend had been justified by everything which had occurred in that House. Every one, on both sides of the House—those who had spoken in favour of the measure, and those who had spoken against it—some on one side, and some on the other—every one had failed to show that the foundation of the principle he and his hon. Friend were contending for was wrong. When, then, it could be shown that they were right in principle, it must be very obvious that they could never be wrong with the country. The noble Lord the Member for the city of London, took exception to the Amendment, because it would endanger the measure of the Government. In the first place, he (Mr. Cobden) did not think that any danger to the measure of the Government would be incurred by any vote which might be given on his (Mr. Cobden's) side of the House, seeing that hon. Gentlemen opposite were going to vote for the three years' proposition, in the hope of keeping the Corn Law on in perpetuity. He would ask his noble Friend and others, had the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government offered any guarantee to the House that, if he could pass this measure through the House of Commons, he could pass it into a law? The right hon. Gentleman had heard the insinuation, and even the threat, that the fate of this measure should be decided in another place; and if he (Mr. Cobden) understood the language of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, it was this—that they (the House of Commons) must look for the rejection of this measure elsewhere. Seeing that the right hon. Baronet could not give them a guarantee for passing this measure into a law, they (the free traders) could not surrender their principle into his hands in favour of a measure, though he (Mr. Cobden) would admit that measure was very little inferior to his own. He would not undervalue the measure. He had said it was 17*s.* 6*d.* in the pound of their (the free-traders') demand; and it was a good guarantee and security for the other 2*s.* 6*d.* The people out of doors—the repealers—neither desired, nor would it be possible, to offer any obstruction to the passing of this measure. The right hon. Gentleman had already allayed agitation by the proposition; and the country was tranquil and in suspense, awaiting the passing of this measure. But the country was only with the right hon. Baronet as he could get that measure passed. If it were now transferred from this arena to be disposed of in another place, he would say that, as far as out-of-door agitation went, if this measure were passed—if it were acquiesced in—that it would be impossible to maintain or excite any intense agitation until the law expired. It was obvious that the law would run out of itself. The English people were practical people; and they would say, "Where is the use of creating agitation? We know the end of it is inevitable—the Act of Parliament has provided for its extinction; and though we have to wait a year and a half, which we would rather not do, still before we could get up an agitation against it the law would expire." But hon. Gentlemen opposite had placed him (Mr. Cobden) and his Friends who were free traders in a position which justified the observation of his hon. Friend the Member for Durham last night. They had, in fact, rendered imperative the very course he then stated. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, in the first place, said they would not let the measure pass if they could help it; and that, if it was passed, they would then agitate for another election in the hope of undoing it. Now, he saw a desperate course was determined upon by the hundred Gentlemen on the other side. ["More!"] No; he (Mr. Cobden) did not think there were more. They were prepared for any desperate course, consistently with the Orders of the House, and consistently with honour, to reject and defeat this measure. They were not only prepared to do this, but they were prepared also, at the first convenient opportunity, to put the present Government in a minority. He, for one, saw great danger in that course. They might not have the power in that case of pressing that measure on the attention of the House until this should be disposed of. Again, there might be some delay in another place, and there were also Motions now on the Paper of the House, which might be brought forward before this measure was disposed of in that House, or elsewhere, upon which the Government might possibly be thrown into a minority. He could foresee the possibility of the Government being out of office before this measure passed the other House of Parliament. He could not say whether the present Ministers' possession of office was worth six weeks' or two months' purchase. He (Mr. Cobden), however, must say, that he could not see either the wisdom or policy in turning the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) out of office. That,

however, was the business of the hon. Gentlemen opposite; his business was to keep this question out of the power of those hon. Gentlemen, and out of their reach. With the country the question was safe; and when they were united on the principle of the immediate and total repeal of the Corn Laws, no power on earth could prevent the carrying of that object. And it was because he foresaw danger—because he foresaw a factious opposition to the present Minister—a course of policy which he (Mr. Cobden) would not lend himself to — it was because he saw in these insidious Amendments of which notice had been given in that House, and the Amendments which had been spoken of in another place, dangers and pitfalls for this measure; it was therefore, and therefore alone, that he was anxious that the Anti-Corn-Law party should preserve themselves intact with the country, in order that, should its opponents succeed in defeating the measure, or altering it to its prejudice, they might fall back upon the country ten times stronger than before. After the division upon the present question, he would give as cordial a support to the right hon. Baronet's measure as any man. He promised him that he would not absent himself from any of the discussions or divisions that might take place upon any of its stages, or the Amendments which might be proposed. Throughout he should feel it to be his duty to give to the measure his most cordial assent and assistance. And he would ask those hon. Gentleman opposite who had taken an enlightened view of the necessities of the country, and who, in some degree sacrificing their own feelings, had, from a conscientious view of that necessity, supported the Government measure, when they saw on the part of the free-trade party no disposition to obstruct, but every disposition to aid them, for the purpose of attaining the object in view, he hoped if, by any unexpected union or combination, or by any accident, a dissolution should be forced on, that those hon. Gentlemen opposite who had so far assisted the Government in their modified measure, when they saw that this attempt to conciliate, by agreeing to this three years' delay, instead of having tended to diminish the clamour or the intensity of the opposition, that every species of factious opposition was offered to the measure, he hoped they would come to the conclusion that, when they did appeal to the country, where there was but one principle recognised—viz., total and immediate repeal, that every vestige of the whole party spirit of Whig and Tory would be thrown aside until the great question should be fairly decided. He did not intend, on that occasion, to go into the question of how the farmer would be benefited by a total and immediate repeal: his opinions upon that point were before the country, and he would not repeat them; but he hoped when this question should be put fairly to the country, and when they found that the farmer would prefer immediate to deferred repeal, he hoped to see, and he did not despair of seeing, the question finally disposed of by a Motion in the way of an Amendment, before the Act passed, or afterwards by a short Bill, that immediate repeal would still be the result. And if hon. Gentlemen opposite (the protectionists) would only consider what they were entailing upon themselves by promoting and compelling the continuance of this agitation—if they would kindly consider what their position really was in the contest—why he, as a Member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, was almost ashamed to enter into the field of battle with them, having such odds in his favour. Broken, dispirited, and without leaders, as they were, the very ghost of the League, when dissolved, would be more powerful than the flesh, blood, and sinews of the whole body of the protection party. He hoped that they would take a cooler and a better view of the case; and if the House of Lords would take his advice—[*a laugh*]—yes, if they would take his advice, instead of—what he would call, were it Parliamentary—the insane advice of the opponents of the measure; if, instead of throwing out the Bill, they would say, "the farmers and the country prefer immediate repeal, we will not only pass the measure as it comes up to us, but make it perfect," the House of Lords would then restore itself to public confidence, and the country would say what was once said by an individual—"Thank God, we have yet a House of Lords."

Sir T. D. ACLAND thought it most unreasonable that the hon. Gentleman and the other Members of the League should, now that they were about to carry their object, hold their triumph incomplete, unless they could dictate the precise terms in which the concession should be made. It was quite natural that they should rejoice in the near fulfilment of their great project; and it did not beseem the hon. Member for Stockport to take the opportunity of raking up old speeches and old vexatious gibes,

merely for the pleasure of showing his antagonism to hon. Members on the other side. He would distinctly say that he considered this a wise, prudent, and considerate arrangement. He could not understand how any person who had seriously recognised the advantage of protection to corn up to the present period, could view the proposition of the right hon. Baronet in any other light than a benefit and an alleviation of the difficulties they expected to encounter. Were they to reject his proposition, and at once accept an immediate and entire repeal, it would be exactly like preferring to go down a very steep, instead of a moderate decline, and to go down it at full speed. They would lose, as at this moment, a protection of 20*s.*, instead of 14*s.*; and when the price was at 48*s.*, they would lose 20*s.* instead of 10*s.* Another point to which he would refer, was the unsettled state of the arrangements between landlords and tenants; at present they did not know how to make their arrangements. He, for one, should be exceedingly glad to come to a fair understanding with his tenants, and to have the opportunity of three years of a partial but comparative security, in which to ascertain how this great change would really work, and to calculate better what would be its effect when carried out to its full extent. Probably the whole work of deterioration would in that interval take place; and they should then know what they had to look for, and might make the best arrangements they could. Another consideration with him was a wish to avoid interference with the details of his right hon. Friend's measure, of which he alone was the best judge, being in exclusive possession of the means of forming an accurate opinion. In fact, he did not choose to share in the right hon. Baronet's responsibility; it was possible the right hon. Baronet (though they could not see it), might be conferring a great advantage on the country; therefore, if his efforts were crowned with success, deserved or not, let him have the full credit of it. But if it should prove a failure, if seasons of agricultural distress should supervene; and if the distress should extend itself to other interests, let the right hon. Baronet bear the whole responsibility. The principle of the measure having been fully and fairly affirmed, they would do best to leave it untouched in the details.

MR. T. S. DUNCOMBE said, he had already stated that he should give his humble support to the measure of the Government as it stood. He was fully aware that by voting with the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, he might give a more popular vote; but he wished to give all the assistance in his power to enable Ministers to carry this measure—the right hon. Baronet having stated, most truly, that he could not be responsible for the consequences of this wide measure if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton were adopted. The right hon. Baronet had certainly stated, that had such a proposition come from the protectionists, he would not have refused to accommodate them; but this had not been the case. Wishing to see the measure carried as it stood, he felt proud to vote with the right hon. Baronet. Having called on the Government to stand by the whole of their original plan, were he now to desert them, and vote for immediate repeal, he should have no right to require from them an adherence to the proposal for either an immediate or prospective settlement. He had voted for the repeal of the Corn Laws long before the Anti-Corn-Law League was in existence; but he regarded this measure in a practical point of view, and with reference to the state of parties in the country. On a former occasion hon. Gentlemen opposite had said they should prefer immediate to deferred repeal; but now, when put to the test, it appeared they would go into the lobby with the right hon. Baronet, whom they were vituperating and calumniating from day to day. The right hon. Baronet would not be safe in the lobby with those hon. Gentleman. He regretted that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had moved this Amendment; it would answer no purpose, unless it were to save the conscience and honour of the Anti-Corn-Law League, who had always been pledged to total and immediate repeal. So had he (Mr. Duncombe) and other hon. Members; and they had voted for it long before these Gentlemen of the League came into that House. Whatever might be the consequences, and however unpopular the Anti-Corn-Law League might make his vote on this occasion, he felt bound to go out with Ministers.

The EARL of MARCH was at a loss to know into which lobby some hon. Members could go with safety. The hon. Baronet opposite told them that the right hon. Baronet would not be safe in their lobby; but he should think, from the circum-

stances which had taken place within the last few years, that the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary was not safe in the same lobby with the hon. Member for Finsbury. However, he might venture to assert that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would not meet with any great degree of personal inconvenience from hon. Members who sat about him. He would not have risen had it not been for the pointed remarks of the hon. Member for Stockport with respect to his noble relative. The hon. Member had stated that his noble relative had declared in another place that he was for an immediate as well as total repeal of the Corn Laws. That statement he begged leave most distinctly to deny. He had the best reason for knowing that what his noble relative really said, was, that he thought it better to have a total and immediate abolition of all duty on corn, rather than a diminishing duty for three years, and then a repeal of all protection, supposing that the present measure was inevitable, and that the proposal of Her Majesty's Government be carried. But his noble relative felt that the measure could not be carried, and entertaining that belief, he was of opinion that it would be the height of folly to advocate an immediate and total repeal of the Corn Laws. What reason had his noble relative for believing it could not be carried? One of the strongest was contained in the statement of the noble Lord the Member for London, who last night expressed his firm belief that if he had been in power, and had proposed a measure precisely similar to that now brought forward by the right hon. Baronet, he should have been in a minority, even though he had been supported by that right hon. Gentleman in his individual capacity as a Member of the House of Commons. In expressing that belief, the noble Lord in effect said that the majority of the House of Commons was opposed to this measure of the right hon. Gentleman. It was clear that the case was so from that statement. The country certainly was against it. Let the House look to the result of the recent elections in proof of that. Let them look to the returns for two divisions of Nottinghamshire, for Gloucester, and for Westminster. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh, and think he had forgotten that the hon. and gallant Officer who had been returned for Westminster voted with the Government. Certainly not; he knew it well, but he referred to that election because it proved that the people of Westminster were better gratified—were in fact delighted to return the hon. and gallant Officer whose principles they were acquainted with—rather than the gallant Officer, a great friend of his (Lord March) who professed one principle in 1841, and another in 1846. The electors preferred a man who adhered to his opinions and pledges, and did not deceive them. The hon. Member for Stockport said he would fight the ghost of the Anti-Corn-Law League against the flesh and blood and sinews of the protectionists. To that contest he challenged the hon. Gentleman. Did the hon. Member, when he made that offer, recollect the position in which he placed the body he so ably represented in that House? Did he forget that before he could produce the ghost of the League, he must entirely annihilate its substance? Whilst he gave the hon. Member for Stockport every credit for consistency, and believed he was actuated in his course of conduct by a desire for the welfare of his country, he could not but say that it was most inconsistent for a Government brought in on the principles of protection to British industry, by a majority of ninety-one, to bring forward a measure for its destruction, and that they ought first, in common honesty, to appeal to the people of this country.

Mr. HUDSON said, that he should not have troubled the House but for the appeal which had been made to him by the hon. Member for Stockport. That hon. Member had misrepresented a statement which had fallen from him on a former occasion. What he had stated—and if the hon. Member for Stockport had read all the debates he must have seen it—was, that at the end of the three years, the probable average would be 35*s.* to 40*s.*, not 25*s.* a quarter. The hon. Member had talked of the ghost of the League. He had met the body of the League in Sunderland, and he thought he might fairly say he had routed it. Now he fairly warned that body, that there was nothing of which the people of England were so jealous as the wholesale manufacture of votes, and the system of misrepresentation and intimidation which for some time had been carried on. There was nothing which the people of England would repel with so much indignation as conduct like that. The League ought to have stated their case fairly to the people of England, and told them the probable effects of the change on the rate of wages;

they should have told them that protection was to be taken, not from the agriculturists alone, but from all interests. The agriculturists had been accused of plunder; but he begged to say, that if protection was plunder, it was plunder in which the manufacturers had joined. He had been taunted by the hon. Member for Sheffield, that while supporting protection, he meant to vote in the coming division in favour of the right hon. Baronet. He thought he had fairly given notice, and had explained why he meant to go out with the right hon. Baronet against the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. As for the hon. Member for Sheffield, he did not know where the hon. Member had got his information, that the farmers were for immediate repeal; he believed that, of the two evils, the farmers would prefer the three years' delay. That delay would enable the farmer so to arrange his ground that in 1849 he would not be obliged to grow corn; and, besides, it would give the Government time to do justice to the farming interest by a reduction of taxation in poor rates, highway rates, and county rates, and also to consider the malt tax. This would be the greatest boon to the farmers, enabling them to malt their corn, and feed their cattle; and in the hope of this, along with the rest, he (Mr. Hudson) would cheerfully support the Motion for three years' delay. With respect to the measure itself, if it turned out better than he expected, nobody would rejoice more than himself, but his reason led him to form a gloomy anticipation. He denied that he was influenced by any selfish motive; and at the same time he must observe that an imputation of selfishness came with a very bad grace from hon. Members opposite. The great interests of the country were engaged. He wished to gain time for them, and therefore he should vote for the Motion of the right hon. Baronet.

Lord WORSLEY was understood to say that he was acquainted with many persons who were extensive farmers of land, and as far as he could ascertain their opinions on the subject, he believed that their wishes were that the repeal of the Corn Laws, if carried at all, should be immediate. He believed that they now anxiously wished that there should at last be a settlement of the question.

Colonel SIBTHORP wished to say a few words before the Committee divided. As some of Her Majesty's Ministers were still without seats in Parliament, he would, in the exercise of that Christian charity which was due even to the right hon. Baronet and his Cabinet, suggest to the House the expediency of restoring the elective franchise to Sudbury. In the Bill to be brought in for that purpose, it would be necessary to insert a special provision, enacting that the borough of Sudbury should return to Parliament those Ministers who had been rejected by the other constituencies of England.

Mr. WAKLEY: I regret exceedingly, Sir, to find that the hon. and learned Member for Wolverhampton persists in dividing the House upon his Motion. However much I may approve of his intentions, and however highly I may commend the purity of his motives, I cannot conceive a more inexpedient course can be pursued by any Member friendly to the measure of Her Majesty's Government, than by dividing the House upon this question. I believe that he has taken this step in conformity with pledges given elsewhere, and, therefore, that the hon. and learned Member does not feel at liberty to abandon the course which he is about to pursue. I feel, however, that it is a most unfortunate step, because out of doors it may have the effect of producing an impression that there is on the part of those who are friendly to the measure of the Government a divided opinion on this great question. But, Sir, there is no division among them; and I think that the country will find that those who go out into the lobby with the hon. and learned Member for Wolverhampton are the most earnest, the most serious, and the most strenuous advocates of the measure of the Government. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may imagine that a different opinion will obtain among the people. But how little do those Gentlemen know of public opinion! So mistaken are they upon the bearing of public opinion on this question, that a noble Lord who addressed the House a few minutes ago claimed Westminster as a proof that public opinion was in favour of the party to which he belongs. Why, Sir, there were two candidates for Westminster; one of whom had long been a determined repealer of the Corn Laws; the other, one who had received some new light on this question. Whom did the electors choose? They chose not the man who had taken a transitory view of the question, but him who had for years been the steady friend of a repeal of the Corn Laws. The Whigs, also, have no right to claim that election

as being in favour of their views. They have no right to set up such a claim; because at the last general election, when three candidates presented themselves to the constituency, representing the Tory, the Whig, and the Radical parties, the electors of Westminster chose a Radical; and they have chosen a Radical now. I beg the House to understand that Radical principles are on the advance and in the ascendant. I regret that the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Wolverhampton has been made, but chiefly on the ground that an impression may exist out of doors that a division of opinion prevails among the supporters of the Government measure. I can assert, however, without fear of contradiction, from my intercourse with the middling and working classes of society, that the impression is all but universal that the right hon. Baronet the First Minister of the Crown has done all he could in introducing his measure in its present shape. But one hon. Gentleman opposite says, "We must go to the country;" another says, "You must go to the people." Why, you know perfectly well that you will not go to the people. If you do, let your elections be determined by a show of hands. You will not do that. Do not speak, then, of going to the people; because they have hands as well as you. You deny to the unfortunate being whose labour goes to create food a voice in the election of a Member to represent him in this discussion; and I am sure from what I have seen that the voice of the people is against you. The hon. Member concluded by imploring hon. Gentlemen opposite not to offer any opposition to the measure of the Government, but allow it to take its course.

Mr. NEWDEGATE wished to say that he had in his possession evidence of the feelings of the tenants, which he thought was scarcely in the possession of any other hon. Member. It had been asserted by the noble Lord the Member for Lincolnshire, that the opinion of the tenant-farmers of this country was in favour of immediate repeal. Now, he had an opportunity that day, within a few hours of coming to the House, of meeting many most intelligent tenant-farmers from various counties; and although he admitted that in the bitter disappointment they had felt at the sudden and unaccountable change of those whom they had trusted, such an expression might have fallen from them, as that they wished the question settled; yet he distinctly denied that the opinion of the tenant-farmers of this country was for total and immediate repeal. With reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury, he agreed with him in thinking that there was a democratic feeling brewing in this country; and he would tell Her Majesty's Ministers that it would grow in a class where they might not expect it.

Mr. VILLIERS replied: The hon. Member for Warwickshire had just given them what he called exclusive information as to the opinion of tenant-farmers, on his (Mr. Villiers's) Amendment, which he had procured from somebody that morning. Now, in answer to that private communication, he would refer to the opinion deliberately expressed in the paper considered throughout the country as the organ of the farmers—he meant the *Mark Lane Express*, in which it was stated in the leading article, that after giving the fullest consideration to what had been said by the farmers' friends in Parliament during the long debate, and after closely examining the speech of the most able of them, namely, the Member for Northamptonshire, they were obliged to come to the conclusion, that neither that hon. Gentleman, nor any of his friends, had succeeded in showing that the tenant-farmers had any interest in the continuance of the Corn Law; and that the illustration given by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire as to the effects of free trade, would not be admitted by the farmers of this country to be just—as the man who addressed his landlord in the terms supposed by the hon. Member, was no specimen of the British farmers in general, but was the case of a bad farmer and an idle man. He thought the Editor of the *Mark Lane Express* would hardly offend his readers by such a statement, if he had known it to be at variance with their real opinion. He (Mr. Villiers) did not rise then for the purpose of speaking again on his Amendment, as he collected from what had passed, that a large majority in the House entirely agreed with him on its merits. He wished, however, to vindicate himself from the reproaches that had been offered to him for making this Motion, and which came from a quarter that he had little expected—he alluded to the lectures he had received from the Member for Finsbury and the Member for Montrose. They charged him with being impracticable, and doing mischief by his Motion. Certainly, he thought it curious to hear those hon. Members setting themselves up

as the practical men of the House, and charging others with embarrassing the Government, and not going with their party. He did not think that the speech they had just heard from the Member for Finsbury, was a very happy example of what was practical—considering that he advised this question to be settled by taking a show of hands throughout the country; but really if those hon. Gentlemen had done any good in their public career, which he did not deny, he thought it was chiefly by a system of isolation on which they proceeded, never heeding what was practical, or what was convenient to any party, but boldly stating and acting upon what they considered right. Now in this instance he really thought they might allow him to act upon the similar principle, without casting imputations as they had upon him and his friends, and as if they were not as able to judge of what was right as themselves. He did not dispute the propriety of the course pursued by some of his friends on this occasion; on the contrary, he had anticipated in making the Motion, that they might oppose him—acting upon the belief that they served the cause better by voting for the measure as it was, than by seeking to amend it then. He did not imply that they were less friendly to the principle of an amendment on that account, and he had said nothing to provoke the practical natures of those hon. Members. He had for some years past taken leave to act upon his own judgment on this question; and though he had unfortunately always been reproached for doing so, and always told that there was something wrong in his Motion, yet he could not think that this was precisely the year to make him regret what he had done. He had advocated this very principle of immediate repeal for some years past, and he did not see why he was to abandon it now: indeed, judging from the speeches of the majority of those who had spoken, and from the opinions known to exist out of doors, he never felt more satisfied of the wisdom and propriety of that course. He begged farther to say, that he had good reason to suppose, until he heard the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, that it would have been adopted by the House; for from the moment the measure was proposed by the Government, the protectionist party had in every direction asserted that it would be far better if the Corn Laws were to be repealed that it should be done at once. He had, indeed, been taunted by those Gentleman with a reluctance on his part to bring it forward now that he had a chance of carrying it: they defied him to make the Motion, as they should support it. Now it seemed that they had discovered that though it was for the interest of the farmer, as they had avowed, to have it immediately, yet that there was some interest which would not be favoured by that—the landlord's interest and the farmer's interest did not seem to be identical in this matter: they were going upon another tack, and assuming that they could defeat the measure altogether. The farmers were now to be encouraged to believe that protection could be maintained, and they were all going to vote for the protection offered them by the Government. He asked if that did not afford the strongest reason for adopting his Amendment? What was it that made it so desirable that the Corn Laws should be repealed immediately instead of in three years' time, but that the farmers and the landlords should at once prepare themselves for the change—should no longer delude themselves by trusting to protection—but for the evil make such arrangements and improvements as should enable them to meet the competition? Nobody in his senses could doubt that these laws must now soon be repealed; and, certainly, the contrary would not be believed by foreigners; yet what was the plan of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, but to encourage the farmers here to make no preparation for the change—to believe it was not necessary? while foreigners, confidently expecting the market to be open, would lose no time in providing for that supply which defective agriculture and bad arrangement between landlord and tenant rendered so necessary for this country. The foreign grower, having no faith in the noble Lord's threat, and having confidence in the success of a policy supported by the leading men of both parties, would be preparing; while the farmers, deluded by their friends, would be found slumbering, when the period for entire freedom arrived. Some of those who had opposed free trade, like the hon. Member for North Devonshire, said, that seeing the change was inevitable, they should be no parties to encourage the farmer to expect the contrary; but this friendly course to the farmer was, it seemed, not to be adopted by the majority: it became the House, then, not to lend itself to the delusion again about to be practised upon that unfortunate class. The time was

now peculiarly favourable for the change: as hon. Gentlemen opposite had entirely failed to produce any panic among the farmers, their inclination was to believe that the law was to be repealed, and they desired to have it settled at once. He had a proof of this from what he had been informed had been the effect of the division on Saturday in several towns where the markets were being held on that day: though the majority was very large, making it certain that the measure would be passed, it was received with almost indifference, in no way interrupting business or exciting alarm. He had it from a farmer who was at the market table at Hertford, that, though the majority was well known to everybody, it was never made the subject of conversation once during the dinner. He had also received a letter from Gloucestershire that morning, in which it was stated, that the noble Marquess who had just been returned for that county, on the cry of protection, presided at an agricultural meeting after the election; and before he had left the room the farmers insisted upon signing a petition to the House, praying for the measure to be immediate instead of deferred. Under all these circumstances therefore, and having learnt from the right hon. Gentleman that he should not consider a majority in favour of this Amendment fatal to his measure, he should consider himself justified in going to a division, though he was aware that, owing to the apprehension of many of his friends on account of the other House of Parliament, it could not be taken as a fair test of the opinion of the House in favour of the Motion.

The Committee divided on the Question, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.—Ayes 265; Noes 78: Majority 187.

List of the AYES.

Acland, Sir. T. D.
Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Acton, Col.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Alford, Visc.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arbuthnot, H.
Archbold, R.
Astell, W.
Austin, Col.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J., jun.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Bankes, G.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hn. F. T.
Baring, T.
Baring, rt. hn. W. B.
Barnard, E. G.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benbow, J.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Maj.
Bernal, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Boyd, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Brisco, M
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Sir A. B.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, C.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Butler P. S.
Campbell, Sir H.
Cardwell, E.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Cayley, E. S.
Chandos, Marq.
Chelsea, Visct.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Childers, J. W.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifton, J. T.
Clive, Visct.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, W. R.
Colquhoun, J. C.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Cripps, W.
Davies, D. A. S.
Deedes, W.
Denison, E. B.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Dickinson, F. H.
Disraeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Douro, Marquess of
Drummond, H. H.
Duckworth, Sir J.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncombe, T.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Du Pre, G. C.
Egerton, Sir P.
Egerton, Lord F.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Emlyn, Visct.
Entwisle, W.
Feilden, W.
Feguson, Sir R. A.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, S. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gladstone, Capt.
Glynne, Sir S. R.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goring, C.
Goulbourn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marquis of
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hervey, Lord A.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hobhouse, rt. hn. Sir J.
Hodgson, R.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Horsham, E.
Hotham, Lord
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, hn. E. G. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hudson, G.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Hurst, R. H.
Hussey, T.
Irton, S.
James, W.
Jermyn, Earl
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Kelly, Sir F.
Kemble, H.
Kirk, P.
Knight, F. W.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lambton, H.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Legh, G. C.
Lemon, Sir C.
Lennox, Lord G.
Liddell, hon. H.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Macaulay, rt. hon. T. B.

Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, W. F.
McGeachy, F. A.
Mahon, Visct.
Mangles, R. D.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Martin, C. W.
Martin, T. B.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mildmay, H. St. John
Milnes, R. M.
Morgan, O.
Napier, Sir C.
Neville, R.
Newdegate, C. N.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
O'Brien, A. S.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Palmerston, Visct.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Philipps, G. R.
Polhill, F.
Pusey, P.
Rashleigh, W.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, J.
Rumbold, C. E.
Russell, Lord J.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sandon, Visct.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Lord
Sheridan, R. B.
Shirley, E. J.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, A.
Smith, J. A.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerton Visc.
Spooner, R.
Spry, Sir S. T.
Stanley, E.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Stanton, W. H.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thompson, Mr. Aldm.
Tomline, G.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Tufnell, H.
Vernon, G. H.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, J. E.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Wakley, T.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wellesley, Lord C.
Wilshere, W.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyndham, Col. C.
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.

Scott, hon. F.
Young, J.
Seymour, Lord
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Bannerman, A.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Busfeild, W.
Chapman, B.
Christie, W. D.
Cobden, R.
Colborne, hon. W. N. R.
Collett, J.
Crawford, W. S.
Currie, R.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dennistoun, J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
Ebrington, Visct.
Ellice, E.
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, Sir De Lacy
Ewart, W.
Fielden, J.
Ferguson, Col.
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Fox, C. R.
Gibson, T. M.
Hall, Sir B.
Hastie, A.
Hindley, C.
Hollond, R.
Langston, J. H.
Layard, Capt.
M'Carthy, A.
McTaggart, Sir J.
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Metcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Oswald, James
Parker, J.
Pattison, J.
Pechell, Capt.
Philips, M.
Plumridge, Capt.
Protheroe, E.
Ross, D. R.
Russell, Lord E.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stuart, Lord J.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Walker, R.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wood, C.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Villiers, hon. C.
Bright, J.

House resumed. Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past One.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 4, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Metropolitan Buildings. 2°. Election Notices (Ireland).
Reported. Print Works.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from William Bullock, Weaver, of Biggar, for the Adoption of Universal Suffrage.—By Mr. Grogan, from Landed Proprietors, Occupers, and other Inhabitants of the Parishes of Caher and Ardfinan, against any Diminution in the Protection hitherto granted to Agriculture.—By Lord Dalmeny, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, and by Viscount Morpeth, from Inhabitants of the City of Ripon, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Sir John Yarde Buller, Mr. Sharman Crawford, and Viscount Morpeth, from Residents and Visitors of Torquay, and Inhabitants of Whitworth and Uppermill, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Sir Thomas Acland, from Members of the Board of Guardians of the Tiverton Poor Law Union, and by Viscount Morpeth, from Guardians of the Poor of the Bradford Union, for Alteration of the Poor Law.—By Lord Dunfermline, from Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the Royal Burgh of Dunfermline, for Alteration of the Prisons (Scotland) Act.

BEQUESTS FOR PIOUS AND CHARITABLE PURPOSES BILL.

LORD J. MANNERS rose to move the Second Reading of the Pious and Charitable Bequests Bill, which, he remarked, was based upon the Report of the Select Committee appointed two years ago to inquire into the state of the law with respect to bequests for pious and charitable purposes. When first he brought this subject under the consideration of the House, he endeavoured to demonstrate the great public mischiefs which were likely to accrue from the continuance, and the great advantages which were likely to be realized by the repeal of the Statute 9th Geo. II., cap. 36. Nothing had occurred since that time to alter his views upon the subject. On the contrary, each succeeding year, as it increased his experience, produced fresh evidence in favour of the opinions which he had long held in reference to this matter. The State had refused to provide for the

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education of our vast manufacturing and mining population; and as to Church Extension, that once popular cry of a Conservative Opposition, why, even the hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford had not ventured to moot it; and he should long recollect the mode in which the very moderate proposition of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, for promoting the spiritual consolation of the inmates of those institutions which were termed "workhouses"—in Parliamentary phrase, but which were styled bastiles by people out of doors—had been defeated in that House. That was one side of the shield: reverse it, and what did they see? Every possible impediment to thwart and defeat that private charity on which the State affected to rely for fulfilling those objects. It was impossible to review the operations of the present law respecting charitable bequests, without perceiving that some fundamental changes were essentially necessary. The present state of the law was calculated to give rise to many evils. He would beg to draw attention to one in particular, with which, he had no doubt, the House was familiar. He alluded to the case of the late Dean of Westminster, whose charitable intentions had been rendered almost nugatory by the deficient state of the law. The Dean had bequeathed *boná fide* personal property to the amount of 5,000*l.*, for the purpose of erecting a church in a district of London which had been very much neglected, and where the deficiency of spiritual accommodation had been sensibly experienced; but the entire of this bequest, with the exception of the small sum of 500*l.*, had been held to be null and void, under the operation of the Statute which he now sought to repeal. Charitable bequests had also been made in favour of the most populous parts of Chelsea; but the intentions of the donors had been there also defeated—a circumstance which could not but be a source of deep concern to the philanthropic and benevolent. It was full time that the House had taken some effective measures with a view to remedying the evil and cruel effects which resulted from the present state of the law. Any one looking to the operation of the law, as it at present stood, would be tempted to suppose that the occupants of hospitals, schools, almshouses, and blue-coat institutions, and the Chelsea pensioners, were objects of actual aversion, and were to be regarded as nothing better than enemies of public order, so frequently did it happen that the intentions of benevolent individuals in their behalf, were defeated and overthrown.

"'The largest charitable bequests I have ever known,' said Mr. Grove, addressing the Manchester Law Association, in 1845, 'entirely failed, owing to the solicitor who made the will neglecting to inform the testator that they could not be satisfied out of moneys on mortgage, of which his personal property wholly consisted.'"

The object of the Bill which he now sought to introduce, was to remedy these defects, and to bring the language of those who ruled the country into uniformity with the positive state of the law. He would proceed to detail the provisions by which he proposed to carry that object into effect. The first Clause of the Bill repealed the Statute 9th George II., cap. 96, and the 2d enabled all British subjects who were legally entitled to do so, to demise their property, real or personal, to any public purpose not in opposition to the policy of the country, or condemned by its laws. The Report of the Select Committee had stated that great weight should be attached to the opinion of Mr. Hadfield, the eminent solicitor in Manchester, who thought that if it were necessary to guard the heir from undue influence *quoad* the disposition of his real property, it was yet more so *quoad* his personal property. The measure now under the consideration of the House provided for this suggestion. Ample safeguards were provided by the 5th and 6th Clauses of the Bill. The 5th Clause contained a proviso for marshalling assets, and provided that nothing in the Bill should be construed so as to enable any testator, by a charitable gift or grant, to defeat or hinder the just and lawful claims of his creditors, if any such he had; and the 6th Clause, in accordance with an old and well-known canon law, gave to the Lord Chancellor for the time being the power to order reasonable allowance out of property bequeathed for religious or charitable purposes to certain relations of the donor, parent, wife, child, or grandchild left unprovided for thereby. But the main safeguard was in the third clause, which enacted that when more than half the donor's property, whether personal or real, was bequeathed for charitable purposes, certain formalities of a very stringent character should be indispensably required. Thus, for instance, it was required that the will, deed, or other instrument of conveyance, should, for the purpose of being effectual, be executed in the presence of three credible witnesses (one

of them being the medical attendant), who should certify, on the back of the deed, that the testator was to the best of their opinion of a sound disposing mind, and in the enjoyment of *mens sano in corpore sano*. The two objections which he anticipated to the measure were these—firstly, that which might be called the political objection, the old hackneyed objectioned against tying up land in mortmain, and thus diverting it from the beneficial operation of commercial competition. And, secondly, that which might be termed the religious objection, and had reference to undue interference with testators in a languishing or dying state. The futility of these objections had, he thought, been completely established by the Report of the Committee. On the first objection, the Committee reported—

"That the whole argument derived from the incapacity of land in mortmain to sustain the feudal, civil, and military incidents obligatory on the land, has for two hundred years ceased to have force, or even meaning, as applied to existing tenures."

It might be narrowed then into the assertion of this doctrine, that it was desirable that no land should be prevented from coming into the market. Now, in the first place, he denied that there was any truth in the assertion that property bequeathed for charitable and religious purposes did injury to the State; and, in the second place, even admitting, for argument's sake, that the contrary was the fact, he maintained that the benefits likely to result to the community from the establishment of churches, hospitals, cathedrals, and almshouses, and their due maintenance and ability to meet the growing wants of successive ages, were such as completely to outbalance any evil of that trivial description. Surely there could not be any truth in the allegation that charitable estates were managed in a manner less advantageous for the public interests than any other description of estates. Surely it was not to be supposed that the tenant of Mr. A., a clergyman holding under a charitable bequest, farmed his land in a manner less advantageous for himself or the public, than the tenant of Mr. B., the squire. He could adduce ample evidence to show that cathedral and chapter lands could be, and generally speaking were, managed quite as well as any other description of estate whatsoever. The noble Lord read some extracts from the reports of the Irish Society, with a view to show that in the Drapers' estate at Moneymore, in the county Derry, the soil was well cultivated, and that the utmost care was taken to promote the moral, intellectual, and physical welfare of the tenantry. He also referred to opinions expressed by the Bishop of London—a good authority on the subject—to show that the polito-economic objection with regard to mortmain was ineffectual, inasmuch as that lands now in possession of the Church were liable to change hands as frequently as most other lands. The objection was in fact a quibble of the political economists, who, he hoped, would stand aside, and not seek to interfere with the progress of charity and benevolence. With respect to the religious objection, all he would say, that if it was valid with respect to real property, it must be equally so with regard to personal; and he never yet heard any one assert, inside or outside of that House, that a case had been established against the clergymen of any Church, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Dissenting, showing that they had surreptitiously, and in an unwarrantable manner, procured bequests of personal property from languishing or dying persons. He had heard many extraordinary charges against clergymen of every persuasion; but he had never heard any such charge as this. He had heard last year of twelve beneficed clergymen having ridden from the town of Exeter on a Sunday to hunt, attired in scarlet uniforms and top boots; and he had also heard that Dissenting ministers in the north of England had been accused of abetting the atrocious crime of assassination; but he had never known it to be alleged against the clergy of the Church that they had tampered with the testator on his death-bed, or induced him to bequeath his property for any charitable purpose. The noble Lord referred to opinions expressed by the Bishop of London with respect to the great improbability of any such interferences being attempted; and in conclusion observed that Mr. Jarman, the eminent conveyancer, had declared that the present state of the law produced litigation and constant attempts at various evasions, as must ever be the case when the feelings of mankind were not in unison with the provisions of the Statute-book. He called on the House now to repeal the law which operated in the injurious manner he had described—a law which had been condemned by the authority of the most eminent of our present conveyancers—a law which had been

denounced by the fervid eloquence of a Palgrave, by the legal authority of a Hadfield, a Jarman, and a Burge; and which had been proved by the fatal experience of one hundred years to be alike impotent for good, most apt and ingenious for evil. He did not wish to disinter the old laws of mortmain: *requiescant in pace.* He would not disturb their slumbers; but he entreated the House to revert to that wise and generous policy that had obtained in our courts of legislature and judicature when a Bacon, a Coke, and a Clarendon, were the luminaries of the one, and the Tudors and the Stuarts reigned over the other, to enact a law of the description he now proposed—a law which was sanctioned by the authority of great modern lawyers —which was according to the better feelings of our nature—and which was calculated to diffuse throughout the land those great and manifold blessings, of which Faith was the mother, Religion the handmaid, and Charity the fulfilment. The noble Lord concluded hy moving the second reading of the Bill.

Sir J. GRAHAM: I can assure the House that I am disposed to meet the proposition of the noble Lord with all the respect that is due to the attention which he has bestowed upon the subject, to the benevolent motives which have actuated him in bringing it forward, and to the opinion of the Committee which gave its sanction to this measure. Sir, the subject having been brought before that Committee with the consent of the Government, I have had time to reconsider the opinion I formerly expressed; and I am bound to state, that that reconsideration has not led me to the conclusion that I can give my support to this measure. It is not my intention, even if I were able, to enter into those more learned considerations in connexion with this subject with which the noble Lord has invested it; I consider it quite sufficient for me to take my stand on the Act of George II., which, for upwards of a century, has fixed and regulated the law on this subject. On the face of the preamble of that Act, it appears that past experience had shown the necessity of special intervention. The words of the preamble are short, but impressive. They say—

"Whereas gifts or alienations of lands, tenements, or hereditaments in mortmain, are prohibited or restrained by Magna Charta and divers other wholesome laws, as prejudicial to and against the common utility; nevertheless, this public mischief has of late greatly increased by many large and improvident alienations or dispositions made by languishing or dying persons, or by other persons, to uses called charitable uses, to take place after their deaths, to the disinherison of their lawful heirs."

The framers of that Act had experience of the evil since the Reformation; and in passing it, they assigned a reason for doing so which I think is still binding on the State. Upon this ground, and resting my opinion still more especially on our experience since the passing of that Act, I am not disposed to disturb the present state of the law on this important subject. First, let me call the attention of the noble Lord, and of the House, to the immense mass of property which, since the passing of the Act of George II., has arisen, as it were, *de novo*, in this country, and which is not subject to the restraints of the Statute of Mortmain. I need not say that all personal property is exempt from the restrictions of that law. Now, what is the amount of that property in this country? I have here a statement of the amount of property on which was paid the legacy duty in the year 1845. It appears that, in the last year, no less than 45,599,714*l.* passed under will from dying persons to legatees, the whole of which not subject to the Statutes of Mortmain or the restrictions of the Act of George II., might have been applied to charitable purposes. But what is the whole amount of the same description of property that has so passed since the year 1797? The language of figures is scarcely ample enough to express it. It appears to have been 1,339,419,511*l.* Now, really Sir, it does appear, with these facts before us, that no facilities have been wanting to enable those who were so minded to leave their property to charitable and religious uses. This applies to personal property; it now remains to be seen whether, as regards the transmission of real property, the obstructions are of an unreasonable character. What are the provisions of the Act of George II. in this respect? By that Act, if a person wishes to dispose of any portion of his real property, even the whole of it, to charitable and religious uses, he must do so twelve months before his death; and the instrument by which he does it must be enrolled six months before his demise? What is the policy of that provision? Why, that if he desires to devote his real property to such purposes, it shall be by a sacrifice of a personal nature made during his life. The best test of his sincerity is, that he shall give up his property while he lives—that he shall not be

enabled to make that charitable disposition at the close of his life, in the last moments of his existence, perhaps under the false impression of an understanding clouded by disease, or misled by priestcraft, that a misspent life may be atoned for at the expense of his heirs. Such a proceeding is no proof whatever of a repenting heart or an awakened conscience. But, on the other hand, if a man will perform the charitable office at the expense of a personal sacrifice while living, that is an act of virtue and of beneficence to which no law ought to be a barrier. Does the Act of George II. offer any such obstruction? No, on the contrary, it carefully avoids any such discouragement. The noble Lord must allow me to observe, that he really, in his Bill, marks his own sense of the very dangers which the Act of George II. was framed to prevent. Many of his clauses, in fact, afford the strongest evidence against his own Bill. For instance, the third clause contemplates the case of a person *in extremis* giving away half his estate to the prejudice of his heirs; an act which that clause considers *primâ facie* evidence of such a feebleness of understanding that it requires that one of the witnesses shall be a medical man, who shall endorse, as it were, on the back of the instrument, that the testator, at the time he signed it, was a person of sound mind. Now, here is the best possible evidence—that of the framers of this Bill themselves—that such proceedings ought to be regarded with the utmost jealousy, and looked at in the true spirit of the Act of George II. as pregnant proofs of a disordered mind. Again, the 6th Clause contemplates a case still more extreme—that of a party on his death-bed disinheriting all his heirs and relations, leaving them altogether destitute. In such a case, a power is given to the Lord Chancellor to treat these beggared orphans and this destitute widow as paupers, and to make out of the estate some wretched dole, merely to support existence, as an act of charity due from the tender mercy of the law to repair the extreme injustice of the testator. As to the 7th Clause, I am not learned in the proceedings of courts of law, but I understand that their present policy is to put the most strict construction on all bequests for charitable purposes. They assume, that unless the bequest can be supported in the deed, no extension whatever shall be given to the meaning or supposed intention of the donor—a rule contrary to the doctrine of *c'y près*, which this Bill carries further than any judgment or any law has yet ventured to go. I confess that I have a very strong opinion on the general question, which, however, I will not urge now, further than to say that the area of these islands being limited, and the accumulation of wealth desiring investment in land being great, it is not desirable more than at present to tie up land and to place it *extra commercium;* at the same time, I do not deny that every encouragement ought to be given to the endowment of charitable institutions by private individuals. On the other hand, I believe there is no point in the present state of our law more difficult to define than what is a religious use. The Statute of Henry VIII. did define them so far—it set aside all religious uses as superstitious that were not specified in the Act; and then it proceeded by express specification to narrow this general term of religious uses. They were the endowment of parish churches, and the perpetual support of a priest for ever. But what does the noble Lord do? He proceeds by his second clause to legalize grants towards all religious or charitable purposes whatsoever which are not prohibited by any law or Statute in force, and are not contrary to public policy. Now, setting aside the difficulty of defining what are religious uses, who is to define "what is not contrary to public policy?" Such questions are difficult indeed for the Legislature to determine; but send them to Westminster-hall, and you adopt the most dangerous possible course. If this Bill were to become law, I am confident that a larger number of suits would arise out of it in the next ten years than has grown out of the legislation of the last half century. A question of what is and what is not a religious use may be a fit one for lawyers to determine; but the proposition of the noble Lord's clause which calls in the courts below to determine what is or is not contrary to public policy is a subversion of the judicial, and a dereliction of our legislative functions. Upon the whole, then, I am very strongly of opinion, that if there be no legislative necessity for this Bill—if the experience of the last century shows you, that under the Statute of George II. there is no undue limitation as regards personal property, there is nothing in the circumstances of the present moment which makes it politic for us to remove those restraints which experience has rendered necessary. On the other hand, there are some consi-

derations which lead me to look on the present time as most inopportune for such a course. But I do not wish to press those considerations now; and I have therefore generally stated the reasons why I think we ought not to agree to the second reading, and why, without meaning the slightest disrespect to the noble Lord, I shall oppose it. The right hon. Baronet concluded by moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. PHILIP HOWARD should give to the second reading of the Bill his support, without pledging himself, however, to its details. There was one clause of the existing Act which had been alluded to by his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which perhaps would require grave and mature consideration before it was altered, and that was the clause restricting the grant of property for charitable purposes unless the grant should have been made a year previous to the death of the testator. He (Mr. Howard) thought, taking it all in all, it was desirable that a due regard should be had to the interests of heirs and the public by restraining the testator from granting large sums of money during a time when he was in a feeble state of health. Whether the time should be a year or half a year was a subject for consideration; but he thought the principle of that law was sound, and that it would be impolitic to deviate from it. With this qualification, he was disposed to give the fullest praise to the measure. It was to avoid legal chicanery, and to give to charity a due and legitimate channel, that the noble Lord had brought forward his Bill, and he had given to it the most mature consideration; and it came prefaced to the consideration of the House by the labours and investigation of a Committee, and he trusted that the principle at least of the Bill would receive the solemn sanction of the British House of Commons.

Mr. MONCKTON MILNES could not agree with the observation of the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary, that the Act of George II. had worked well in this country. He could not agree with him, because he did not see that the Act had effected the great moral purpose of giving to the religious and charitable institutions of the country a full and large share of the superfluity of the wealth of the country, nor on the other hand that it had, by any simple or distinct mode of procedure, prevented a great amount of chicanery or legal embarrassment. The right hon. Baronet said he would not go into the history of the mortmain law, nor should he; for if hon. Gentlemen would take the trouble of reading the Report that had been laid on the Table of the House, they would find in it almost all the important information that was to be obtained on the subject. He should feel very much surprised if, after studying it, they should not come to the conclusion that this law of George II. was adapted to a different state of society from that in which we now lived. It might be considered as a direct effect of the great feudal system of which we had lived to see the entire extinction. The leading characteristic of that system was the battle that was always going on between the landed proprietors and the different corporations; and the landowners having, as they now had, the power of making the law in their hands, used that power somewhat more unmercifully than they had done of late years. The corporations of that period were treated with a great deal more harshness than even such corporations as the Anti-Corn-Law League were treated in the present day. The object of these laws was to prevent corporations, either ecclesiastical or lay, from accumulating large masses of property to the injury and detriment of the landed interest of this country. That was the real basis of the matter, in its political consideration. He could not but allow that it had also its religious bearing. It was to be remembered that at the period of the reformation nearly one-third of the land of the country was in the hands of the Church; and if it had so remained vested in the Church, the proposition of his noble Friend (Lord John Manners) would be not only very superfluous, but exceedingly unjust. It was, however, to be considered, that the Reformation in England had produced effects that it had not produced elsewhere. It caused the alienation of those great masses of property from important public purposes to be squandered on favourites; and with profligacy unexampled the nobility had plundered the wealth of the Church. In part of Germany, and especially in Saxony, the landed estates of the Church had been transferred to civil and religious corporations for great public purposes, and had laid the foundation of that system of German education from which Germany now derived such signal advantage, and from the loss of which England now stood intellectually in such a melancholy position. When he considered these things, and that there had been an alienation of those masses

of property from public purposes, he must say that any law which placed an impediment upon any individual, to prevent him from making a sacrifice for those public purposes, was an injurious and unnecessary law. He did not think—when they considered the state of public opinion in the time of George II., and when they saw how little the interests of the people were regarded at that time in this country—that the preamble of an Act of Parliament, asserting that great evils had flown from certain measures, could now be considered as a valid argument against the proposition of the noble Lord. With respect to the remark of the right hon. Baronet, that difficulties would arise respecting the interpretation of the words "superstitious uses," he could not deny, that, as the law stood now, those difficulties might occur; but he would be most happy to aid in bringing in some Act to clear up those difficulties. He thought they could hardly now determine what were to be called superstitious uses. The term had reference to a period in this country when the law took upon itself to judge for the consciences of men; that time had passed, and they should now leave the definition to the conscience of each individual. With respect to uses relating to matters of public policy, he thought that was a matter which it would not be difficult for the Judges to decide. He trusted, therefore, that the Government would allow this Bill to go into Committee, or if they did not consent to do so, that they would themselves propose some measure. He should give his full support to the Bill; and he hoped his hon. Friend the Solicitor General would apply his great legal acuteness to improving it in Committee, rather than reject it altogether.

SIR G. GREY would not have thought it necessary to trouble the House with any remarks, concurring as he did with the right hon. Baronet in opposition to the present Bill, had he not been a member of the Committee on the Law of Mortmain to which allusion had been made. He wished to state how far he was responsible for the Report. When that Committee was appointed it was late in the Session; and during the time that he (Sir G. Grey) was in town and attending the House, he had attended the meetings of the Committee, He had heard a great mass of evidence adduced by the noble Lord before the Committee; but he was compelled to leave town before the termination of the Session, and the Report of the Committee was made after he left town. The Committee consisted of six or seven individuals; and various paragraphs of the Report, he believed, were only adopted by the casting vote of the Chairman. Though he (Sir G. Grey) thought the subject deserving of attention; though he was prepared to say that the law was not in a perfectly satisfactory state; and though he was prepared to support some reasonable and practical amendment of that law, still he was not in any degree responsible for the Report of that Committee; and as a member of that Committee he was now prepared to offer the most decided opposition to the second reading of the Bill. The evidence adduced before the Committee certainly proved that there were some anomalies in the existing law, and he was prepared to remedy such anomalies. He must remark that the right hon. Gentleman was not correct in stating that there was an unlimited power given even over personal estate; for it had been held by courts of law that money invested in mortgage, in turnpike trusts, and in railways, was in an analogous position to land. It appeared that partial relaxations of the law had from time to time taken place, for the purpose of allowing churches, parsonage houses, and schools to be built; and he would be prepared to support a proposition for the amendment of the law, and the consolidation of those enactments. Lord Hardwicke had stated very distinctly the reasons which induced the Legislature to pass the Act of George II. The chief reason was to prevent the locking up of land, and also to prevent persons from being prevailed upon in their last moments to give away their property. One of the witnesses examined before the Mortmain Committee, Mr. Matthew, gave the following evidence as to the extent to which a relaxation of the existing law was desirable. The Chairman having put the question—

"What in your opinion would be the practical effect of a repeal or alteration of the 9th George II.?"

Mr. Matthew replied—

"That would depend on the extent of the alteration or repeal. If it were absolutely repealed, I think the practical effect would be that a great deal of land would be conveyed imprudently to charitable uses, and that a good deal of mischief which the Statute of Mortmain aimed at would be the consequence; but I think an alteration, if prudently made, so as to give sufficient liberty and a limited extent for the free settlement of such charitable estates as I have mentioned, would be of very considerable benefit; by benefit I mean not merely promoting the particular

views of particular religious bodies, but of the country generally, as tending to facilitate the means of religious and secular instruction in many places where it is vastly and pressingly needed."

Again—

"I much doubt whether it would be wise to relax this Statute on the subject of wills. It appears to me that it might give a very undesirable opportunity to ecclesiastics and other persons, of whatsoever denomination they might be, to surround the death-bed with a very improper importunity, producing the evils which this Act sought to remedy."

Within those limits there was room for improving the law. A good deal had already been done to promote the erection and endowment of churches; and, if greater facilities could be afforded to parties who wished to make provisions for the instruction, religious and secular, of a growing population, he thought that, without trenching on the principle of the Act 9 George II., an amendment of the existing law was desirable; but he could not approve of the measure now proposed. In the 3rd Clause of the noble Lord's Bill, the certificate of three witnesses was required in the case of a death-bed bequest. What did the noble Lord intend these three witnesses to certify? Not only that the testator was of sound disposing mind, but that he had executed the deed of his own free will, and without any undue solicitation. What could the medical man know on the latter point? In conclusion, he begged to repeat, that he concurred with the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) in opposing the Bill.

VISCOUNT CLIVE said, that the right hon. Baronet who had just sat down had treated the question in a very different manner from the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department. The right hon. Baronet having been on the Committee, was willing to grapple with the question, to agree to relaxations of the law, and bring it into a state in unison with the wants of the times; but the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary said he would have nothing to do with the question, he would reject the Bill, and stand upon the experience of the century during which the Act of George II. had been in force, forgetting that in twenty-five years from the passing of that Act its provisions and workings were found so oppressive, and so calculated to put a stop to charitable and good works, that a special Act was passed, exempting Queen Anne's Bounty from its operation; for the building of churches had been stopped by it. Who, in modern times, were the greatest innovators of the Act of George II.? Why, the Government to which the right hon. Baronet belonged, both in Ireland and England. Had they not passed the Charitable Bequests for Ireland, which allowed property to be applied to such purposes; and had not what was commonly called Sir Robert Peel's Act for England allowed grants of real property for the building of district churches, and for providing ministers and perpetual curates, notwithstanding the law of mortmain? This anomaly was thus created, that there might be a mother church with a small endowment, to which no grant could be made, while a district church in the same parish might be endowed *ab libitum* under Sir Robert Peel's Act. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners also had power to receive land in spite of the law of mortmain. As to the doctrine of "*c'y près uses*," all land was liable to become of greater value than when left by the testator; and the Court of Chancery would interfere to apply the surplus funds, without abuse, and extend the institutions to which they applied in a spirit conformable to that of the original donor, and prevent misappropriation by trustees. There was a large property in the town of Ludlow now in Chancery, in which the Court was prayed to make such an appropriation as would prevent the money from being squandered without benefit to the institutions. There was also an ancient hospital in Northampton, in which the Court of Chancery had increased the number of poor men who were to be maintained, and applied part of the funds to building schools and churches in the district. Now he could not think it would be necessary that bequests should be disposed of by the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery. If this Bill were proposed to be an imperial law, there might be some grounds for the objection of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department; but as the Bill did not apply to Scotland or to Ireland, he did not see why the right hon. Baronet should hold out to the House the Statue of 9 George II., as the palladium of the Constitution. In Scotland, though at the time of the Reformation no country possessed a population who ran riot to a greater extent, there the ecclesiastical institutions had been then completely overthrown by the interest of the nobility and the vehemence of popular prejudices, and yet in no country was there a more strict law of entail. In spite of that, however,

the only restriction upon bequests to pious and charitable uses and purposes was, that the bequest must be by deed or will executed thirty days and twelve months, as the present Bill proposed, before the death of the donor or testator. On this point, the evidence given before the Select Committee by the Lord Advocate of Scotland was very important. He stated, that he did know an instance in which this power had ever been abused, or where property had ever been left to a charitable institution, to the prejudice of the lawful heirs of the testator. Considering the great infringements which had been made in this law by Her Majesty's Government; considering the state of spiritual destitution which prevailed; considering that the Statute of 9 George II. neither applied to Ireland or to Scotland; considering, also, that according to the evidence of Mr. Bury, it was shown that in the Colonies, or at least in Jamaica, which was free from those restrictions, the most beneficial results had been attained, he did not think that he was asking too much of the House to alter and amend the laws relating to the disposition of property to pious and charitable purposes. By this means private benevolence would be promoted, and a supply of the means of instructing an increasing but impoverished population, acquired. They did not seek by this Bill to burden the country with the repayment of loans for the construction of workhouses, but to obtain a supply of that sort of charity which will neither degrade the recipient, nor impose a burden upon the industrious classes of the community. He hoped therefore that the House would not hesitate to go into a discussion of the provisions of this Bill, with a view to make such reasonable alterations and amendments in the law as would prevent charitable purposes from being defeated by mere technicalities.

SIR R. H. INGLIS, while he admitted that his noble Friend who had just sat down, had supported with great zeal and ability this Bill to which his own name was attached, thought his noble Friend did not seem to comprehend the extent to which the measure would go. His noble Friend said that the provisions of the Bill would not extend to Scotland, to Ireland, or the Colonies. Now, to exclude Scotland, and Ireland, and the Colonies from the operation of this Bill, it ought to contain a clause of exception, such as was invariably inserted in all Bills intended to have a special and limited operation. This Bill, however, contained no such clause; and therefore he apprehended no lawyer would contend that the Bill, if passed, would not take effect in all parts of Her Majesty's dominions. Because the Charitable Bequests (Ireland) Bill had been passed by the present Government, that afforded no reason for saying that this Bill ought to receive the sanction of the Legislature. He had strongly objected to the Charitable Bequests Act for Ireland, and he strongly objected to the present Bill; and he thought that many hon. Members who had supported the first-mentioned Bill, might, with great justice, object to the present measure. His hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Monckton Milnes), whom he did not now see in his place, had spoken of amateur lawmakers bringing in Bills which the profession could not comprehend, and which the Judges could not understand; and he had volunteered an opinion in the presence of the two hon. and learned Gentlemen the law officers of the Crown, and also of two other distinguished members of the same profession, that this Bill was much more intelligible to barristers, and would be capable of being decided upon by Judges of the land. He wished to meet his hon. Friend at the outset, and to question his facts. His hon. Friend had chosen to draw a comparision between the progress of the Reformation in England and its progress in Germany; and he had said that, while in England the great mass of ecclesiastical property had been confiscated to a profligate nobility, in Germany it had been applied to the sacred purposes of education. He begged to ask his hon. Friend if he knew what had become of the two noblest ecclesiastical institutions in Suabia, and whether he was aware that one of them had been converted into a glass manufactory, while the other was devoted to the manufacture of cotton? His hon. Friend had exhibited in the statements he had made to the House, but little acquaintance with facts. He admitted that at the time of the Reformation one-third of the landed property of England was in the possession of ecclesiastical bodies—that was the lowest estimate that had ever been made; others had reckoned it as much as two-fifths. In the abbey of Glastonbury the value of land was estimated in the year 1719 at no less than 500,000*l.* per annum; and it was in order to put an end to grants to so vast an amount being continued, that the Statute of George II. was passed. But every Act

passed by the Legislature was met by some new device invented by the ecclesiastical bodies in order to evade the law; and hence further legislation was called for at the end of about every ten years. His noble Friend who had introduced this Bill would remember, that about four years ago he (Sir R. H. Inglis) had, by some observation, induced his noble Friend to suppose he was not unfavourable to some alteration in the laws of mortmain. He admitted that there were some difficulties, such as those which had to-day been pointed out by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Devonport (Sir G. Grey); but to cure those difficulties he was not prepared to sanction a measure so vast and sweeping as that now under consideration. Besides, he thought that the objections urged by the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary, in reference to the political economy of the question, had not been met by any hon. Member who had yet addressed the House. The right hon. Baronet had put the question of charity on its true ground; and he concurred in the opinion that the foundation of charity, public as well as private, was self-denial. And where was the self-denial exercised by any individual who would deprive his family of their just expectations that they would succeed to the wealth which formed the accumulation of his life, by bequeathing it to strangers, however exemplary the character and conduct of those strangers might be, and deserving of support the charity of which they might be the trustees? The right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir George Grey) had directed attention to the provisions of the 3rd Clause of the Bill, but still he hoped to be allowed to offer one more observation upon a minor point in that clause, but which was worthy of the consideration of the noble Lord, the framer of the Bill. The Bill contained no interpretation clause, as usual, declaring that the word "man" should be taken to mean "woman," and other equally singular incongruities. This interpretation clause was omitted from this Bill; and though it provided effectually against the exercise of an unsound discretion on the part of a testator, it left a testatrix altogether unprotected. The females want protection. Did the House remember a case that had been recently before the public—he alluded to the case of Ann Frances Calbeck. This lady had lived for thirty years in the house of her brother upon terms of the greatest affection; and she had given every reason to the rest of the world that her brother would succeed at her death to her property. It appeared, however, that she had been ordered by her spiritual director to draw up a will in favour of a religious community among whom she worshipped, and which on her death succeeded to her property. The will was drawn up not in her writing, but at her verbal dictation to the Roman Catholic Dean, the Rev. Dr. Meyler. [Mr. O'Connell: It is contradicted by a letter of Dr. Meyler.] Did the hon. and learned Member for the county of Cork mean to state that the will was executed on the written instructions of the testatrix? [Mr. O'Connell: I will state the facts of the case by and by.] The will, it appeared, was executed at the chapel of the Rev. Dr. Meyler, and was left in his possession, instead of remaining in the custody of the testatrix, so that if she had changed her mind she would have had no means and opportunity of carrying the change into effect. But it remained in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Meyler: it was admitted to be proved; and though the father of the lady endeavoured to set it aside, he was defeated. To these facts he believed that no contradiction could be offered; and he contended that this case showed the necessity of the female sex being protected. They were not so protected by the terms of the clause in the Bill by his noble Friend the Member for Newark. It was said that this Bill came forward backed by the recommendation of the Select Committee which had been appointed to inquire into this subject. On referring, however, to the last clause of the Report of that Committee, he found that they stated—"Your Committee do not feel authorized by the terms of the reference to report in favour of any specific alteration of the law of mortmain;" and the *prestige* of a Bill coming forward on the recommendation of the Committee was negatived when it was seen that, on a division, the Committee voted three to three, and that the noble Chairman had closed the proceedings by giving his casting vote. Under such circumstances, while he thought the Committee were entitled to every credit for the work they had done, yet he hoped hon. Members would not be led to give an incautious vote in favour of the second reading of the Bill. Let them remember that the provisions of this measure were intended to take effect in all cases not prohibited by law, or which were not contrary to public policy. Now, the public policy had been to afford meagre assistance to the

Established Church, and to discountenance the Church of Rome; and under this Bill the policy hitherto pursued would be rendered nugatory. There were still several other points worthy of the attention of the House, with regard to this measure. To one of those points he could not refrain from alluding. Let the House look again at the 5th Clause, and say whether it were just or proper. Under it, every debt contracted by a man after the date of the grant or gift, was defeated. Prior to the execution of the grant it provided that no such grant should operate to the injury of any creditor; but the same security was not given in reference to the payment of any debt contracted afterwards. On another point his noble Friend the Member for Newark had shown some qualms of conscience, because he provided that in the case of every widow left destitute, or child left unprovided for by such dispositions of property to charitable uses as this measure contemplated, it should be competent for the Lord Chancellor to award them a provision; but after that it was equally competent for another Lord Chancellor to annul the previous order. On the whole, he objected entirely to the present measure, which was wholly at variance with the whole course of public policy pursued ever since the Reformation.

MR. O'CONNELL said, he should have felt much more grateful to the hon. Baronet if he had condescended to communicate with him before he had made a statement which was unjust to Dr. Meyler. The hon. Baronet had no better proof of the facts he had stated than a newspaper. [Sir R. INGLIS: It was a report of the trial.] The facts were these: The will was deliberately made and proved; the cause was debated on both sides, and was heard before an extremely able judge, Dr. Keating, who pronounced in favour of the will, which was admitted to probate. The very rev. Dr. Meyler had no pecuniary interest whatever in the will; not one penny of the money was left to him—it was all bequeathed to charitable purposes. No community had a more respectable person than the Dean of the Archdeaconry of Dublin. The facts of the case were these. He did not pledge himself to minute accuracy on trivial matters; but it appeared that the lady lived with her brother, not her father. [Sir R. INGLIS: I said her brother.] The hon. Baronet said both father and brother.

SIR R. INGLIS: I said she had been living for thirty years in the house of her brother; and the father endeavoured to dispute the validity of the will.

MR. O'CONNELL: From an early period of her life this lady declared her intention to bequeath her property to charity. Her brother knew this fact, and he had the fullest opportunity of endeavouring to change her intention, but she adhered to her intention: the will was deliberatively made; and he asked, where was the evidence of undue influence? The statements of counsel, upon which the hon. Baronet had relied, were not the best evidence against the other party. He wished to set the House right upon another matter. The Statute of George II. was never enacted for Ireland; how, then, could it apply to Ireland? It did not apply to that country; there was no such Statute applicable to Ireland till the Charitable Bequests Act; and what did that do? It did nothing with reference to the law of mortmain. The Lord Chancellor (Sir E. Sugden) declared that the charitable bequests were legal, and there was not a single enactment in the Act to the contrary. Schemes for charitable bequests came before the Court of Chancery, were considered by the Master, and settled by a decree of the Lord Chancellor. The Charitable Bequests Act did not touch the matter at all: it enacted merely that the will or deed must be executed not less than three months previous to the death of the testator or grantor; that was the only limitation. See how the case stood in England. No devise of land in such a case was valid: you could not give the land itself, but you could give the full amount of the value of the land, or make the bequest a charge upon the land. There ought not to be one law for England, another for Ireland, and another for Scotland. He hoped the noble Lord would remember the lesson he had learnt to-day, not to make too great a concession to an adversary. If he had not done so, he would not have seen his concession to the prejudices of others construed into an admission of the soundness of those prejudices. The hon. Baronet said that securities were necessary. Why, a billion of personal property had passed through the Court of Probate in the last fifty years; and what securities had there been for that amount of property? It was time for some alteration, and for some relaxation of the religious rules excluding charities. Had they too much church property? Were they overloaded

with charitable bequests? They wanted more religious instruction. "You and I," said the hon. and learned Member, "differ upon points of religion; but we agree upon this—that it is our first duty to give religious instruction to the rising generation. Do not attempt to stop the hand of charity. Of whatever sect or persuasion we may be, let us encourage bequests for giving instruction to the young; and let us not by a one-sided or rather left-handed Act of Parliament obstruct the diffusion of spiritual instruction. If the noble Lord succeeds in removing this obstruction, he will gain credit with the people of England, and with the Christian world at large."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, he could not suffer this discussion to close without offering a few observations upon the subject. He believed that the noble Lord had paid the greatest attention to the subject; and it was with very great regret that, after the most careful consideration, he could not consent to the second reading of this Bill. It was necessary to understand the question. They were called upon to decide upon the propriety of repealing the Act 9 George II., c. 36, and to substitute some other provision in lieu of it. The House had been referred to a Report of the Committee of 1844 on Mortmain, for an explanation of all the details of the subject, and for proper information. He had turned to that Report, and he had found a most remarkable inaccuracy in the very outset of it; for he found it there stated that the 9 George II., c. 36, was treated and acknowledged as the existing law on the subject of mortmain. But it was not only not the existing law on the subject of mortmain, but the Act was not at all applicable to mortmain; and if the House looked at the evidence of Sir Francis Palgrave (who had been characterized as the modern Selden) they would find such a clear and distinct explanation of the Statute of 9 George II., c. 36, as should have prevented any mistake. Sir Francis said—

"In the first place, the term mortmain, in the way in which it is used in common discourse, and generally employed, is in some degree inaccurate. Mortmain, in a legal sense, means simply the acquisition of real property by corporate bodies having perpetual succession; but in common language it is applied to the restrictions imposed by the 9th George II., which prevent the giving of landed property to charitable purposes. It is very important to call the attention of the Committee to this distinction, because the erroneous or conversational sense has been sanctioned by great authorities; for example, by Sir William Grant, who, in a case arising upon the 9th of George II. ("Attorney General v. Stuart," 2 Merivale, 261), says, 'I conceive the object of the Statute of Mortmain is wholly political;' and if so high an authority could misconstrue such a Statute, others may not have seen accurately the bearing of earlier Statutes which have a very material influence upon the question. You think Sir William Grant misconstrued it by ascribing it to political influence? His misconstruction consists in denominating this Statute a Statute of mortmain, whereas it is not mortmain; it is a Statute for preventing the alienation of land to charitable uses; preventing, of course, real property being given to charitable corporations, as well as to trustees for charities. The Statute 9th George II. has no peculiar reference to communities having perpetual succession. It does not prevent bequeathing land for purposes not being charitable; for example, to the city of London, or to any non-charitable institution or society empowered to take land. The Statutes of mortmain apply generally to all corporations having perpetual succession."

Now, it would be most important for the House to bear this distinction in mind throughout the whole discussion: they must distinguish between the mortmain Acts and the 9th George II., c. 36, which was no Mortmain Act at all, but was passed to prevent devises of land altogether, and gifts, except under restrictions, for charitable purposes. With regard to the Mortmain Acts: the first was Magna Charta, as confirmed by the 9 Henry III., which first imposed restrictions upon gifts of land to religious houses; and it only prevented religious houses from taking such gifts, and leasing the lands so taken back again to the donor, whereby certain incidents of tenure were lost to the Lords. That Act was intended to prevent such gifts to religious houses; it only applied to the regular and not to the secular clergy; and one of its objects was to secure certain civil rights to the lords and the State. It was curious to trace the history of the struggle between the ecclesiastical bodies and the Legislature on the subject of the Statutes of mortmain. The ecclesiastical bodies were desirous of evading the Statutes; and the object of most of the legislative enactments was to provide a remedy for particular devices as they grew up. The next device of the ecclesiastical bodies was to take long terms of years, which was the origin of the long terms in our family settlements. The 7 Edward I. provided that no person, religious or other, should acquire for a term of years land in mortmain, under penalty of forfeiture; and the 13 Edward I., introduced a provision on the same subject, and it provided against another evasion, by what was termed common reco-

veries, enacting that the questions as to the right of the plaintiff or demandant should be decided by a jury. The clergy then devised the distinction now preserved between the use and the possession of lands, which was not granted to themselves, but to nominal feoffees, the religious houses reserving all the profits to themselves. The 15 Richard II., c. 5, introduced a provision by which no such purchase could be made in future, and enacted, that such lands already purchased should be amortized by the King, or the landlord. And this Act of 13 Richard II. for the first time applied the mortmain Acts to secular corporations, as well as spiritual corporations. The 23 Henry VIII., afterwards prevented gifts in mortmain for superstitious uses. Thus the law continued both as to mortmain and superstitious uses, with the exception of the 7th and 8th William III., which empowered the Crown to grant leases to corporations to hold lands in mortmain, and provided that no gift or devise to a spiritual or lay corporation should be valid without a license from the Crown; but there might be a gift or devise of land or of money for charitable purposes without any restriction whatever. Such being the state of the law, the Act 9 George II. passed. The Committee had said that "they had failed to arrive at any certain knowledge of the true grounds on which that Act was passed." He (the Attorney General) had looked at the Act itself, and it was evident, by the words of the Act, what motive had induced the Legislature to pass it. He found that although the title was general (the title was no part of an Act of Parliament), the preamble and the enacting part showed what were the intentions of the Legislature, and the mischiefs they meant to guard against. The preamble has this recital:—

"Whereas gifts, or alienations of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, in mortmain, are prohibited or restrained by Magna Charta, and divers other wholesome laws, as prejudicial to and against the common utility; nevertheless, this public mischief has of late greatly increased by many large and improvident alienations or dispositions made by languishing or dying persons, or by other persons, to uses called charitable uses, to take place after their deaths, to the disherison of their lawful heirs."

Now, when he saw that the preamble, which was frequently called in the profession the key to the meaning of the Legislature, states that these alienations were made by persons to the disherison of their lawful heirs, he could not doubt what was the mischief it was intended to prevent. The enactment was applied, therefore, precisely and specifically to the mischief. The Act prohibits altogether any devise of land, or that which savours of the realty, for charitable uses; but it allows gifts of land to be made for that purpose, if made by deed executed twelve months before the death of the donor, and enrolled within six months after its execution. It had been apprehended that persons might be influenced in moments when the mind was weakened and the body broken down by disease, to give away their property. But this danger was not thought proper to be guarded against in the case of personal property, which had no local, permanent, or visible character; the Legislature showing their feeling on the subject by making a distinction between the two species of property, and preventing the testator from exercising the power of giving away his real or landed property, while no such restriction was imposed upon him with regard to personal property. Let it not be imagined that at the time this Act was passed there was any apprehension that Roman Catholic priests would influence dying penitents, and that this was the danger intended to be provided against. On the contrary, when the Act of 9 George II. was framed, Roman Catholics did not enjoy the power of holding or using land; for it was not until the 18th of George III., or forty-two years afterward, that they were allowed to take land. The object of the Legislature was to prevent the undue influence which was likely to be exercised at the approach of death in favour of pious and charitable uses. Such being the law of the case, the question naturally arose, did any great mischief result from the provisions of the 9th of George II., which called for the interference of the Legislature at the present moment? In satisfying himself upon that point, he naturally turned to the evidence taken before the Committee which had sat on this subject; and after reading over the whole of that evidence as carefully as his other engagements would permit, he had laid it down with the impression that there had been no case made out of any crying mischief which called for this or any other remedy that could be proposed. When he attempted to ascertain what were the views of the different individuals who appeared before that Committee, he could not help feeling how difficult and dangerous a task it was to attempt interfering with the law,

and how apprehensive persons ought to be of the consequences of such interference—consequences which it was often almost impossible to have anticipated. He found that one witness was for upholding the existing law in its full vigour; that another was for making it infinitely more stringent; while a third, a man whom they all esteemed and respected, the Bishop of London, was disposed to relax the law in favour of the Established Church, but not one step further. And when the noble Lord stated that all the conveyancers denounced the Act of the 9th of George II., he should have made an exception with regard to the evidence of Mr. Hodgson and Mr. Mathews, both of whom were opposed to a repeal of that Act, especially with regard to wills, though they would slightly alter its provisions with respect to deeds. He altogether denied that the practice of the Legislature in later times had been to relax the laws of mortmain. Although in the case of the Queen Anne's Bounty, and some other favoured instances, the law might have been, to a certain extent, relaxed, yet it should not be forgotten that very lately the Legislature had given its sanction, in the passing of the Charitable Bequests Act, to an extension of the law to Ireland. By the Act to which he alluded, the principle of the Act 9th George II. was applied for the first time to Ireland, as in that country no restriction of the kind had previously existed. He would beg to refer the noble Member for Shropshire (Lord Clive) to that fact, in answer to his allegation that the principle of the law had been relaxed. As the arguments against the measure had been nearly exhausted by hon. Gentlemen who had preceded him, he would not detain the House by going further into them. It had been stated that there were no instances of the ministers of any religious denomination influencing dying persons to leave property for religious purposes; but, on this subject, he would beg to call the attention of the House to some of the answers given by the Rev. Mr. Sherburne and the Rev. Mr. Trappe. The former rev. Gentleman stated this in his evidence (Question 1,104), in answer to the following question from the hon. Member for Pontefract:—

"Would you admit it to be a doctrine of your Church, upon which you would practically act, that it would be your duty, in case you found a penitent upon his death-bed, to incline him to leave bequests to charitable and religious purposes, for the advantage and good of his soul?—I never have recommended anything of the kind, and the probability is, that I shall never do so; but then, if a person looks upon certain spiritual deeds as beneficial, and he is unable to do those of one kind, he may properly, I think, do those of another; a person, for example, cannot pray much, and he cannot do many other things of the same kind when he is very ill, but he can give alms sometimes, and he can do such things as are very well deserving of recommendation; but as to urging a person to do anything of the kind, I would never do it; but if a person should say to me, 'Is it not well to do so?' I should say, it is well.

"My question was, whether such conduct, or persuasion of the penitent, would be considered as dogmatically incorrect?—I think it would not be dogmatically correct."

Again, the Rev. F. Trappe stated, in p. 149 of the evidence, in answer to the Chairman (Lord John Manners)—

"Is it your opinion that the Catholic clergy have the means of exercising undue influence to procure money from their penitents, to the injury of their families?—If they are so profligate as to avail themselves of it, they certainly have the means; and I am quite certain, in practice, that I could often have got large sums, if I had tried.

"Have you any reason to believe that any Roman Catholic clergyman does use that influence?—Yes, I have had reason to believe so; not in very great sums.

"Do the Roman Catholic clergy interfere in making wills for their penitents, so as to get property for themselves, or for charitable purposes?—I believe so; and I have heard of instances from such respectable authority, that I can entertain no doubt that it is sometimes done."

Now, it appeared that the Rev. Mr. Trappe was under suspension at the time he gave that evidence; but then he was either a respectable person, or he was not. If he were respectable, his evidence must have weight; if he were not, then the House should consider the danger of such persons surrounding the death-bed of penitents. He thought it unnecessary to enter into the different clauses of the Act. The noble Lord had relied on the fact of particular formalities being required in some cases; but then the cautions and safeguards suggested by the Bill were only to be used on occasions when the donor was giving away by will or deed more than half his entire property, estates, or effects, whether real or personal. It appeared to him that no case whatever had been made out against the 9th of George II.; that the points relied upon were inconsistent and unsatisfactory; and that the noble Lord had, therefore, failed in laying a foundation before the House for the changes proposed by this Bill. He thought it would be most dangerous for persons *inops concilii* to be permitted to dispose of their property, real as well as personal, to the

prejudice of their heirs and relations; and on these grounds he certainly could not give his consent to the second reading of the Bill.

MR. CHARLES BULLER said, long as this discussion had been protracted, he would make no apology to the House for trespassing for some minutes on their attention in reference to the subject before them, not only because his name appeared on the back of the Bill, but also because, since the first introduction of this subject to the House, he had always supported the noble Lord upon it, and because, almost without exception, his hon. Friends on that (the Opposition) side of the House had given no support to this Bill. He wished, therefore, to state the reasons which had urged him to give his most cordial support to the proposal of the noble Lord. He would not follow the arguments either of the hon. Member for the University of Oxford, or of the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down, or the speeches made by other hon. Members, with respect to the minute details of the Bill, as these were points which could best be discussed when the Bill got into Committee, which he did not despair of seeing. That to which he called the attention of the House more directly was the principles of the Bill, and the objects which it had in view. He might say generally that the object of the Bill was to effect a uniformity of the law with respect to real and personal property. That, he should say, was an object which was in all instances desirable to effect to as great an extent as possible, in order that the holders of different kinds of property might not be confused by the conflicting operation of the laws made for their regulation. In the matter at present before the House, he thought that a sufficient case had been made out from the evidence to show that it would be, at any rate, desirable to put the law with regard to real and to personal property upon the same footing; and for this obvious reason, that the distinctions made by the law between real and personal property were not always understood by the lawyers themselves, and were most undoubtedly not understood by the public generally. In proof of this fact, he need only observe, that many instances had occurred in which property, treated as personal property, had been found afterwards to come under the restrictions applying to real property. Now, that was an evil which they had a right to remedy. He would say that in England the law should be so clear in this respect that all persons should be enabled to know what property they might devise for charitable purposes, and what property they could not so treat. To do this, were they to make the disposition of real property as free as in the case of personal property, or were they to place on the latter the restrictions which existed with regard to real property? for hon. Gentlemen opposite ought to carry their argument to that extent. They were guilty of an inconsistency in putting forward, as the ground on which they opposed this Bill, the necessity of continuing restrictions in the case of real property, while they declined extending the same restrictions to personal property. Were they to show that jealous care of real property, while they neglected personal property, which required their care still more? Were they impressed with the idea that while the churchman was to watch by the bed of the rich proprietor of land in his last moments, unable to take any advantage of the dispositions of nature at that awful hour—while the law gave that protection to the owner of real property—no provision was to be made for that far more numerous class whose sole possession consisted in personal property? The landed proprietors of England were, after all, a comparatively small number in respect to the holders of personal property; and on which of the two classes would frauds, if perpetrated at such moments, operate most severely? Most undoubtedly on those who were dependent on personal property. If they could persuade the rich gentleman having 10,000*l.* a year in landed property, to leave a portion of that property to the Church, or for any charitable uses, the evil would be far less felt than in the case of the poor man who might take a part of his small property from his family to apply it to similar uses. Surely the protection extended to the rich man, ought, by a just and wise Legislature to be also insured to the poor man, whose only property consisted in personal estate. The retired tradesman, the retired professional man, the retired merchant, and the annuitant who lived on the interest derived from funded property, might each give away his property for charitable or religious uses without the slightest hindrance; but the moment the landed proprietor was concerned, then the Legislature at once interfered, and declared that he should not disinherit his heirs. He maintained that if the one class were subjected to these disabilities, the

other class ought to be treated in a similar manner; and therefore if there were any force in the objections put forward against this Bill, it was gross inconsistency in that House not to extend the same protection to the holders of personal property, which, as landed proprietors, they extended to themselves. They had the unequivocal declaration of the right hon. Baronet opposite, that all personal property was exempt from the operation of the existing law, of which they complained; but they had at the same time the fact, of not the slightest complaint or allegation of improper interference with dying persons by their religious attendants. He would submit, therefore, that these facts proved hon. Gentlemen opposite to be insincere—if he might use the term without offence—in the course which they adopted. They elevated the supposed dangers to a disproportionate magnitude when they wished to resist an alteration of the law; but they, at the same time, showed by their conduct that they felt perfectly convinced that the great majority of the community went on perfectly well without requiring the safeguard of this law, the necessity of which was so strongly contended for. With regard to the 45,000,000*l.* a year of personal property which was bequeathed in this country, there were no complaints alleged. Was it not, therefore, fair to suppose that the owners of personal property were quite sufficiently anxious to provide for their heirs? And this feeling experience showed to be ten times as strong in regard to the transmission of real property. These were the grounds on which he supported this alteration of the laws of mortmain. He did not think that it was a mischievous thing in any country for persons on their death-beds, or at other times, to appropriate any portion of their property to public purposes. It seemed to him that the feeling was strong enough among mankind generally to take care of their heirs and relations. Not only that natural feeling, but also the custom of this country in maintaining the law of primogeniture, tended to prevent persons from being too much inclined to separate their property in order to devote portions of it to public or charitable uses. He thought that it would be more consistent with the real wants of the age to give every possible encouragement to the appropriation of property for public purposes. There was certainly no indisposition among their countrymen, or no disinclination to devote their energies and their lives to the accumulation of large properties for themselves and their families. The feeling was also, he thought, prevalent in favour of leaving the great bulk of the property with the eldest son, in order to try to found wealthy families, and to vie with the aristocracy. The same feeling respecting the transmission of large properties also prevailed among the aristocracy. That feeling was one which, in his opinion, no wise and enlightened Legislature should wish to encourage. On the contrary, they ought to promote any tendency which might exist in favour of devoting some portion of private accumulations to the great wants of the country. They had the fact of great annual subscriptions being collected for religious and charitable purposes; but they had no instances, like those in former ages, of individuals founding magnificent churches and colleges, and other public institutions. The disposition to grant property for public purposes was, in his opinion, a laudable disposition, and one that ought to be encouraged. He would say, too, that they had no reason to apprehend that this disposition would be carried to too great lengths. The feeling of the present age was not in favour of founding colleges or other great public institutions, merely with a view, on the part of the donor, of leaving his name to posterity. The Act of the 9th George II. was in his view quite sufficient to show that they need apprehend no danger from its repeal; and he would also submit that every argument of public policy would lead to the necessity of establishing uniformity in the law. He believed that there was nothing would prove more beneficial to the Established Church than an alteration of this law; and on this point he differed altogether from his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford. He had always looked back to the policy of their ancestors as a wise one, which encouraged in every possible way the making the Church independent of the support of individuals, and to provide for its ministers by appropriating property for their use which they would hold in the same manner as other possessors of property. His hon. Friend, with his usual liberality on such subjects, said that he thought the principle of the law of mortmain ought to be relaxed in favour of the Established Church, but not in favour of other religious persuasions. There again he should differ from his hon. Friend. He would treat all religious communities in the same manner. Was it right that all the property belonging to dissent-

ing bodies should be held by—he would not call it evasion of the law—but by a constant application of the provisions of the law, which enabled them to hold property in perpetuity by continual re-settlements? That was not a desirable state of things to have continued with reference to the Wesleyans, and other religious bodies, who had to depend on the liberality of their flocks. It would, he thought, be far better to do away with all that cumbrous machinery, and tell these bodies at once that they might come under the operation of the law. He did not think that it had been at all shown that the properties of public bodies were worse managed than those of individuals. If they looked to Greenwich Hospital, and to the Universities and Colleges, they would find that these institutions were attended to, not for the good of the immediate possessors, but for the benefit of the institutions in perpetuity. He would not say that the estates of corporate bodies were as well conducted as those of some enterprising individual proprietors; but taking them on the whole, he would maintain that they were as well conducted as those of other proprietors. Having stated these grounds for the general support of the Bill, he would enter into no very minute inquiries into the details referred to by his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, and by his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford. He could not, however, avoid alluding to the assertion of the hon. and learned Gentleman, that the Legislature had by a recent enactment extended the principle of the 9th George II. to Ireland. He would be perfectly content, for his own part, if the House were prepared to extend to England the principle of the Irish Charitable Bequests Act, with all its restrictions. As he understood it, the Act of the 9th George II. required that the grant for religious or charitable purposes must take effect immediately. One of the great merits of that Act had been stated to be that it tested the sincerity of the donor, by requiring that he should deprive himself of the enjoyment of the property during his lifetime. Now, he did not want any such test of charity or of any other virtue whatever. He thought the restriction a very unwise one, and one which afforded no fair trial of the existence of the virtue. But his hon. and learned Friend said, that the restrictions of the 9th George II. were extended to Ireland by the Bequests Act. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I said the principle of the Act was extended to Ireland.] He thought it was not so. The Irish Act only provided that bequests should be made three months before the death of the testator, while it did not require that the bequest should take effect immediately. In Ireland the testator was not deprived of a single comfort during his lifetime, as the bequest was not to take effect until after his death; and he was therefore justified in saying that the provision of that Act was totally different from that in force in England. As to other objections that had been raised, they were such as could be best considered in Committee, and he would not, therefore, enter into them at present. He trusted the House would not now go back to the feelings exhibited by hon. Members on both sides of it, when this subject had been brought forward on former years; and he would call upon his noble Friend, if he were even now defeated in his object, not to relax his efforts or to abandon the principles on which he relied, and which he (Mr. Buller) was convinced would ultimately triumph.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL would vote against the Bill, as being wholly uncalled for, and opposed both to the principle and the policy of the law of England. His hon. Friend who had last addressed the House, had correctly stated that the difference that existed, was between law that affected real and personal property; but he wondered that it had not occurred to his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. C. Buller) that it would be utterly impossible, consistently with the law of England, to assimilate real and personal property. A distinction between them almost universally pervaded the law. With respect to the disposition allowed by this Bill of real and personal estates for charitable purposes, that which was personal and was devoted to charitable purposes, was not against the policy of the law; but if the same provisions were brought to bear on real estates, they would be contrary to the first principles and the policy of the law. When he looked at the first clause of the Bill, and found that this, its essential provision, enabled any person to dispose by will or deed of real as well as of personal estates to any amount, and without any restriction, he thought it could hardly have occurred to the framer of the clause to what extent its operation would militate against the principles of the law; and it would be impossible to amend this clause without altering the whole principle of the

Bill. He found a direct power given to a testator, at his own free will and pleasure, to dispose of real estates of any amount to any corporation without restriction. This struck directly at the prerogative of the Crown, and at the real interests of the public. It was the known law of the land that no corporation, except those created by Act of Parliament, with an express provision to that effect, could use or dispose of lands without the direct license of the Crown. This license was never granted without the advice of a Minister of the Crown responsible for the advice. Whereas under that Bill, the first direct effort contemplated was to enable any individual, without the consent of the Crown, to bequeath lands, and invest them in any corporate body for any purpose, without permitting the Crown to possess any control whatever; a power which he considered was in every way calculated to prove injurious to the best interests of the country, when left without the control of some responsible person; and if there were no other objection than that of depriving the Crown of its prerogative, he considered it would be an insuperable one, according to the constitution and principle of the law of this kingdom. And when they came to consider the true policy of the law, it created surprise that such a proposition should be made; as the whole Bill was directly against what had always been held as the public policy of this country. The hon. and learned Gentleman then proceeded to show the different effects produced upon the public by the disposal of personal and real property. In reference to the former, he said the effect was trifling, as when a person bequeathed his personal property—for instance, supposing it to be money invested in the funds or any other public security—the act of his doing so did not in any way injure the public, as the circulation of that money was not thereby withdrawn from the public, but they still retained the same benefit; but in real property it was very different, as it was a fixed estate that must remain under the control of the possessor of it alone; and it had been the policy of the country from time immemorial that the Crown should possess a prerogative over it, which had always been exercised, and which it was well known deprived landowners of the power of even entailing it upon their own offspring for more than a few generations, Land would be incapable of improvement or change according to the noble Lord's Bill, which he considered to be a great evil. In short, he thought the noble Lord had not considered what must be the practical operation of such a measure. At present land in trust for charitable purposes might be improved; but by the projected Bill no one who held land in perpetuity under it could deal with these lands, except according to the strict terms of the will creating the trust, or under the authority of the Lord Chancellor. Would not such restrictions put a stop to all improvements not consistent with the terms of the instrument? Was not that of itself a great objection? Whilst other lands, passing from hand to hand, were upon each change undergoing vast improvements, the lands derived under the Bill of the noble Lord would remain stationary—incapable of transition. In ordinary cases of bequests, the money would be blended with the circulation of the country; but here there was perfect stagnation, which, considering the limited geographical extent of the country, the increasing population, and the necessity for making available every inch of land for the purpose of cultivation, according to the most improved method, was, he repeated, a great objection, and one which the Legislature could not overlook. The Bill had already undergone so much discussion, that he did not feel justified in detaining the House in alluding to the different clauses; but could not help saying, that if the noble Lord had brought in the Bill at the request and by the advice of the most skilful and experienced lawyer, in order to promote litigation, he could not have introduced one which was likely to prove a more fruitful source than the present. There was not, he would undertake to say, one clause from the beginning to the end of it, which, in all human probability, would not produce twenty lawsuits every year. In one clause there was the expression "public policy," upon which the construction of the clause in a great manner hinged. What was "public policy?" The noble Lord did not go on to define it in his Bill, which was in itself a striking exception to the general course of public policy. Again, in the third section, there was a requirement, when the testator devised more than half his property for charitable purposes, that there should be a certificate, attested by three witnesses—the medical attendant one of them—"that no undue influence or solicitation had been used." The Bill did not set forth that the attesting witnesses should

make this declaration according to the best of their belief: they must do so positively. How could they do so? It would be a most rash declaration for any man to make. But yet, if the attestation was not positive, the terms of the instrument had been departed from, and the bequest was invalidated, probably, after a tedious lawsuit. With respect to the reference to the Lord Chancellor as regarded provisions for relations, he thought it was most unsatisfactory. Such relations must be reduced to a state of destitution indeed, when they would apply to the Lord Chancellor. But how could they do so? Either by a tedious and expensive process, or by suing in *forma pauperis*. As to the latter, a man might be in very indigent circumstances, and yet not able to sue in that way. He saw nothing in the arguments which had been adduced which entitled the noble Lord to call upon Parliament to pass such a Bill. Several cases had been cited by the noble Lord: amongst others, that one of the late Marquess of Westminster, which he thought was not at all a case in point. The late Marquess of Westminster wished to have left certain lands for charitable purposes, but in consequence of his death the requirements of the present law were not complied with, and so the claim failed. He (the Solicitor General) had never heard of such a case; but if it had been so, there was nothing to prevent the present Marquess, as his heir-at-law, following out his intentions, supposing that the late Marquess had absolute power over the lands, from their not being entailed. He, therefore, contended that no case had been made out calling for the interposition of the Legislature: but even if a case had been made out, the principles involved in this Bill were so directly opposite to the very first principles of our Constitution and public policy, that he thought he would best discharge his duty by voting against the Motion of the noble Lord.

Sir J. HANMER was surprised at many of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman the Solicitor General. He would not pledge himself to an unqualified assent to all the provisions of the Bill, but would vote for its going into Committee. He did not think landed and personal property ought to stand on the same footing. He would not give full rein to the desire of his noble Friend, but at the same time thought there would be no danger whatever in giving a certain defined and limited application to his Bill. He had great objection to the law as it now stood; for of all laws that he could conceive, the greatest nuisance of a law was that which, like the present law of Charitable Bequests, could be easily evaded. In fact the present law was continually evaded; and he would venture to say that the solicitor of any hon. Member would undertake to evade the provisions of the 9th George II. And as to litigation, he thought the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just addressed the House had been too lavish of his censure on the present Bill in this respect. He would venture to say there was no Act of Parliament, however ably and carefully drawn up, in which that hon. and learned Gentleman would not find twenty loopholes. A noble and learned Lord in the other House possessed the same facility. Lord Eldon used to fall into a perfect tremor at the sight of a new Act of Parliament; and, indeed, there was, as he had already said, no Act which was not liable to the same fault-finding. As to the present law, he knew of his own personal knowledge that it had been evaded, and that it was in fact, as to restrictive powers, but so much waste paper. Was the state of the large towns with respect to the Church satisfactory under the present law? He thought not. The hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford had appealed to Government to take into consideration the state of the Church in the large towns, and make considerable grants of public money for the purpose of bettering its condition. The Government had declined, and as he thought very properly declined, acceding to the request; but in that refusal he thought they had accepted an obligation to revise the law by which private charity was restrained. It was perfectly frightful to see the state of the Church in the large towns. He would not dilate upon the duties which a conscientious clergyman had there to perform; but every hon. Member must be aware that such a post ought to be filled by a man of the highest character and the greatest ability, tact, piety, and activity; and yet such a man received no more compensation than one of their menial servants. He would be exceedingly glad to see all the heartburning which arose out of the state of the Church in the large towns satisfactorily settled; and for this purpose the present law of mortmain must be considered. It was his determination to vote for going into Committee on the Bill.

Mr. HAWES said, when a Bill of so

much importance was introduced, some grand practical evil should be pointed out, to remove which legislation was rendered necessary. Now, he had not seen that any such evil was pointed out in this case; and as to the statement of the hon. Baronet who had just spoken respecting the spiritual superintendence of the large towns in this country, he thought that this Bill would not in any way facilitate the provision for that purpose which was considered desirable. He did not wish to see either personal or real property accumulated in the hands of ecclesiastical or lay corporations; and he was disposed to think that the jealousy of such accumulations, which led to the enactment of Statutes of mortmain, was founded on just principles. He objected to the principle of this Bill *in toto;* he did not think it was susceptible of improvement; and therefore he could not consent to go into Committee on this measure. He would prefer seeing some restrictions placed on the bequest of personal property, rather than facilities afforded for the bequest of real property.

Viscount EBRINGTON wished this bill to go into Committee, though he would not pledge himself to all its details. He considered that, in the present day, instead of too much money being appropriated to charitable purposes, persons were rather disposed to expend money on their own personal comfort and that of their families. He wished to state, not with any view of affording another instance of inconsistency on the part of the right hon. Home Secretary, for that was superfluous, that the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham), when the noble Lord (Lord J. Manners) brought forward a similar measure to the present, last year, expressed his opinion that such a measure ought not to be confined to the Established Church, but ought to extend generally to all denominations. Now, one of the very next measures brought forward with the sanction of Ministers, was the Church Endowment Bill, in which there was a direct interference with the law of mortmain. How was it, he would ask, that the right hon. Baronet, within a few days after making the declaration to which he had referred, could sanction a measure which interfered with the Statutes of mortmain in favour of the Established Church only? He (Lord Ebrington) considered, that if such an interference was sanctioned, the same privilege which had been accorded to the Established Church, ought to be extended to the Roman Catholics and Dissenters. He would vote for the second reading of the bill, without pledging himself, as he had before said, to all its details.

Mr. COLQUHOUN said, the noble Lord who had just sat down had referred to the Church Endowment Bill, which provided for the appropriation of a limited amount of land — [Sir J. Graham: A limited amount of acreage]—to the endowment of churches, and had rested on that ground in some measure his support of the present Bill. Now there was the greatest difference between granting small sums or allowing the appropriation of a limited acreage for the endowment of churches and schoolhouses, and enabling persons to obtain from those who were influenced by charitable feelings large grants of landed property, which, instead of being available for the commercial interests of the country, would be placed under permanent ecclesiastical control. Were they prepared to afford facilities to ecclesiastical or lay bodies for obtaining, by the means which had been referred to by the Attorney General—by taking advantage of the weakness of a man on his death-bed, whose powers of mind and body were impaired, and who was in those circumstances in which it was most desirable to guard against the improper disposal of property—grants of large tracts of soil, the value of which could only be maintained by perseverance in an improved system of cultivation? On these grounds, although fully appreciating the motives which had induced his noble Friend to bring forward this measure, he felt it his duty to oppose the Bill.

Mr. P. BORTHWICK denied that all the lands in Scotland which were under the dominion of the present law relating to bequests, were in an unimproved condition. There, for instance, was the land adjacent to George Heriot's hospital, near Edinburgh, which every hon. Member who had seen it must admit was in a high state of cultivation. In fact, where such land was turnip sowed, it arose from other causes. He thought every argument that had been advanced, and every speech that had been delivered against and in support of the present Motion, demonstrated the propriety of going into Committee on this Bill. The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham), and the hon. and learned Gentlemen the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, had admitted there were evils which required correction. The faults noticed in the Bill, which were, after all, but trifling, would be remedied in

Committee; and he would, therefore, vote for going into Committee upon it.

Lord J. MANNERS hoped the House would allow him to notice a few of the objections which had been made to his Motion. The case of the Marquess of Westminster, which he had previously mentioned, but did not wish to fatigue the House by fully detailing, had been stated by the Solicitor General not to be a case in point. The hon. and learned Gentleman must have arrived at that conclusion without a perfect knowledge of its nature. He held in his hand the fullest details, which, though he had not the permission of the gentleman who entrusted the documents to him to read at length, he would read an extract from one of them, which would put the House in possession of the facts, and show the hardships which the present law entailed. The late Marquess of Westminster, in September, 1844, conveyed certain trusts for the purpose of building a church, a school, and twelve almshouses in Chelsea, setting forth the site, &c. Early in the following spring the Marquess died, three or four months after the execution of the deed. In consequence of the estate of the late Marquess being entailed, the present Marquess, although most desirous to fulfil the wishes of his deceased father, could not do so, according to the present state of the law, unless some Bill were brought into Parliament giving the necessary powers. The writer of the above statement added, that he had been looking forward with the most sanguine expectations to the realizations of the intentions of the deceased nobleman; "but all our hopes will be cut short by the cruel law of mortmain." He (Lord J. Manners) thought, where such cases existed as that, there was need for legislative interference. From a wish not to occupy the attention of the House, he had not mentioned another case; but, challenged as he had been to show the inconveniences of the present law, he hoped the House would allow him shortly to state it. The letter was interesting. The writer said—

"I inherit a small estate from my father—a few acres—a small thing, but mine own. I entertain the same sort of affectionate feeling towards it as the nobleman for the manor which his ancestors have lived in for ages. Every possessor of property must feel anxious about its final disposal. I have no relative except one, who is far advanced in years, and whom, in the course of nature, I must outlive. Under these circumstances, my duty pointed to the poor of the parish in which the property is situated as the nearest heirs. But the law is such that I cannot leave my little patrimony for the benefit of the neighbourhood."

He thought that was another case showing the hardship of the present law of mortmain. Then the hon. and learned Gentleman had made much of an alleged infraction of the Royal prerogative; but a stroke of the pen in Committee would obviate that objection, as it would most of those of the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford. The hon. and learned Attorney General had attempted to throw ridicule on the whole Report of the Select Committee on Mortmain, in consequence of their having stated, in the fourth paragraph of the Report, that the 9th of George II., c. 36, was, in fact, the mortmain law now in force. The hon. and learned Gentleman contended that that Act had nothing to do with the law of mortmain; and he (Lord J. Manners) was willing to admit that, strictly speaking, it was not one of the Statutes of mortmain; but surely this error, which was one into which lawyers were constantly falling, did not justify the condemnation of the whole Report. The hon. and learned Gentleman had affirmed the Bill to be subversive of "the public policy of the country." If the hon. and learned Gentleman meant subversive of the policy of the Act of George II., which it proposed to repeal, he of course agreed with the hon. and earned Gentleman; but if he meant that the public policy of England had always been in favour of Government restrictions on charity, then he denied his proposition. Sir Francis Palgrave said, in his examination before the Committee, that from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George the Second, the prevailing feeling of the country, of the Legislature, and of the lawyers in particular, was in favour of piety in its most extensive sense. He feared, after the speeches of the two law officers of the Crown, he could not say such was the feeling of the lawyers of the present day. If the evils which those hon. Gentlemen opposed to the measure seem to anticipate, were to follow the passing of this Bill, how was it that the present law did not guard against them in Scotland, in Ireland, and in our Colonies? Why were our Colonies left without protection? Canada and other places were, if that view be correct, allowed to be overridden by the priesthood; and when he saw his hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle, himself a Scotchman, rise to oppose him, he expected to hear from his hon. Friend a most melancholy account of death-bed solicitations and destitute heirs in Scotland; but then he

should have met his hon. Friend by the conclusive evidence of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, who told us there was no abuse of the kind. He most confidently asserted that a case had been made out for going into Committee; and he felt assured, above all, that the present wants of the country were not met by its institutions. He, therefore, with all confidence, asked the House to give the Bill a second reading, for he assured them that he would persevere in his efforts; although he might be defeated this time, yet he would persevere until some great relaxation was made in the present law of mortmain, or he had carried his measure.

The House divided:—Ayes 24; Noes 60: Majority 36.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Hope, A.
Archbold, R.	Howard, P. H.
Bentinck, Lord G.	M'Carthy, A.
Borthwick, P.	Milnes, R. M.
Brotherton, J.	O'Connell, M.
Browne, hon. W.	O'Connell, M. J.
Clive, Visct.	O'Connell, J.
Courtenay, Lord	O'Conor Don, The
Dickinson, F. H.	Somerville, Sir W. M.
Duncan, G.	Trelawny, J. S.
Ebrington, Visct.	
Fielden, J.	TELLERS.
Glynne, Sir S. R.	Manners, Lord J.
Hanmer, Sir J.	Buller, C.

List of the NOES.

A'Court, Capt.	Hindley, C.
Allix, J. P.	Hodgson, R.
Arkwright, G.	Hume, J.
Baillie, Col.	Hussey, T.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.	Inglis, Sir R. H.
Beresford, Major	Jermyn, Earl
Bowles, Adm.	Joscelyn, Visct.
Broadley, H.	Kelly, Sir FitzRoy
Bruce, Lord E.	Lawson, A.
Buller, E.	Mahon, Visct.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Morpeth, Visct.
Cardwell, E.	Newdegate, C. N.
Colquhoun, J. C.	Patten, J. W.
Crawford, W. S.	Peel, J.
Cripps, W.	Protheroe, E.
Dennistoun, J.	Sheppard, T.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.	Sibthorp, Col.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Spooner, R.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.	Stansfield, W. R. C.
Escott, B.	Stanton, W. H.
Estcourt, T. G. B.	Strutt, E.
Ferrand, W. B.	Sutton, hon. H. M.
Forster, M.	Thesiger, Sir F.
Frewen, C. H.	Thornely, T.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.	Trench, Sir F. W.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.	Walpole, S. H.
Greene, T.	Wawn, J. T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.	Wortley, hon. J. S.
Grogan, E.	
Hawes, B.	TELLERS.
Henley, J. W.	Young, J.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.	Baring, H.

Bill put off for six months.

METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

SIR J. GRAHAM moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the 7th and 8th of Victoria, c. 84, for regulating the construction and use of buildings in the metropolis and its neighbourhood, by authorizing the appointment of a third referee. The object of this appointment was to prevent the inconvenience arising from a difference of opinion among the referees; for, if there were only two, and they happened to be divided in opinion, there was no possibility of arriving at a decision. This addition to the number of the referees would not increase the expense; because one of the present referees, each of whom received 1,000*l.* a year, having declined to act, it was proposed to divide his salary between the one to be appointed in his place and the third referee, giving them 500*l.* a year each, and allowing them at the same time to pursue their professional avocations, which they would be disqualified from doing under the present law.

MR. HAWES said, that if this Bill were to be passed, he should like to have a distinct understanding that some other measure should be introduced in the course of the present Session of Parliament, for the purpose of removing the multitudinous defects which existed in the Metropolitan Building Act of last year. He did not know a single eminent builder or surveyor who did not say that there was but one remedy for that mischievous Bill, namely, the repeal of it altogether. Every one acquainted with its working said that it was almost impossible to amend it. He had been informed of many of the decisions of the official referees, all of them exhibiting the vexation, annoyance, and expense to which parties had been subjected. One was the case of an individual who wished to alter a pigeon house. A dispute arose between him and the district surveyors, and an appeal was made to the official referees, who gave a solemn decision as to whether the question came within the Act. All those cases which were left to the official referees could only be decided upon the payment of very large fees, and those fees must be paid by the appellants, whether the decision were in their favour or not. For every hearing by one official referee and registrar, the charge was a guinea and a half; and by two official referees and a registrar, two guineas. For every final award, according to the decision of the official referees, the charges ranged from one guinea to twenty-one guineas. [Sir J. GRAHAM: They were

the fees under the Act.] True, they were under the Act; but it was the Act of which he complained. He was not going to oppose the present Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. On the contrary, he thought it was necessary from the imperfections to be found in the Act. It might be necessary to make what was a bad Act even tolerable; and he should not consider that he had uselessly taken up the time of the House if he succeeded in impressing upon the mind of the right hon. Gentleman, that in every district, and amongst men upon whose authority reliance might be placed, there was but one opinion as to the mischievous effects of the Act. The introduction of this Bill ought to be accompanied by a distinct promise to bring in an amended Bill as soon as possible in the present Session. He believed, however, that the simplest course would be to repeal the Act; and that, by taking up the former Buildings Act, and making a few Amendments, a very good Bill might be constructed out of it. He recommended the Government to consult some of the most eminent surveyors upon the subject. With regard to the board of referees, he should oppose it altogether. It had inflicted great inconvenience upon the public, and he hoped that that part of the Bill would be entirely omitted.

MR. HODGSON also bore testimony to the dissatisfaction which prevailed. The Act was passed in a considerable hurry, and there was no time given to consider its details. He would impress upon the right hon. Baronet, that, in bringing in any amended Bill, he should take care that its provisions were duly considered; and to do this with advantage, he deemed it to be highly expedient that persons who possessed the necessary information should be consulted. In the parish of St. George, there was the strongest feeling of disapprobation as to the present Act; still he would not go the length of asking the right hon. Baronet to propose the repeal of the law, but to introduce an amended Bill at a period of the Session sufficiently early to enable the House to reconsider the whole matter.

MR. T. D'EYNCOURT had never heard a measure more generally condemned than the Bill of last Session, and there was no doubt that it had occasioned very considerable inconvenience, vexation, and expense.

MR. FORSTER did not see the necessity of appointing a new referee, if the Bill were to be merely temporary in its duration. It appeared that the referees were to be allowed to follow their own private business, than which, as public officers, nothing could be more objectionable on principle. The best remedy was the repeal of the Bill of last Session; but if that course were not adopted, he would strongly advise the right hon. Baronet to consult those who were best acquainted with the subject; and though it would not be right to defer the introduction of a new Bill to a late period of the Session, yet he hoped it would not be prepared in a hurried manner.

MR. HENLEY said, that at the time the Bill of last year was before the House, he marvelled very much that Members representing the metropolitan districts suffered it to pass; for no one who attended to the Bill, or rather the parts of the Bill, and the extraordinary alterations that took place in them, could fail to be convinced that the person who framed the Bill had no uniform system in view, and could have little sound information upon the subject. He had always felt confident that the Bill would not work well, and that it would inflict the greatest inconvenience and annoyance upon every body who was so unfortunate as to live within the range of its operation. For his part, he thought the best plan was to repeal the Bill and begin again.

SIR J. GRAHAM was extremely sorry that the measure which received the sanction of the Legislature last year should have met with such condemnation; but it should be borne in mind, that in endeavouring to amend the old Act, the Government yielded to the wish of the public, and also, he believed, to the wish of that House. The House would remember that at that period he had a great variety of measures to attend to, and that a subdivision of labour was in consequence rendered necessary. The result was, that this particular matter was undertaken by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests; and his noble Friend directed his most earnest attention to the preparation of the measure. To the best of his judgment he brought it forward as an amended and useful Bill. It underwent a great deal of discussion in that House; and the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Hawes), with his usual assiduity, applied himself to that discussion. He advanced many objections to details; and for the purpose of obviating these, his noble Friend qualified the Bill as far as he possibly could, with the hope that it would work well. He was bound

to say, however, that what he had heard from both sides of the House, and in private, did lead him to the conviction that the measure, as it now stood, was imperfect; and he begged to state, on the part of the Government, that they were preparing a Bill to amend the Act of last Session, and that that Bill was in a very forward state. With respect to the Bill he now asked leave to introduce, unless the operation of the existing law was altogether suspended, that Bill was indispensable. Under the Act of last Session, there were two official referees at a salary of 1,000*l.* a year each; but in giving them that salary they were told that they must not follow their own private business. One of them had since resigned in consequence of that condition being attached to the office, and positively refused to discharge the duties longer. If the disqualification to follow their own business were repealed, there would be no difficulty in finding persons fully competent to perform the duties; and, therefore, it was proposed to appoint two official referees at a salary of 500*l.* a year each, with liberty to pursue their own profession, in the place of one person at a salary of 1,000*l.* a year, with the disqualifying condition attached.

Leave given.

Bill brought in, and read a first time.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 5, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—*Received the Royal Assent.* Public Works (Ireland); Drainage, &c. (Ireland); Fishery Piers and Harbours (Ireland); County Works Presentments (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Landowners, Tenants, Farmers, and others, resident at Stow on the Wold, Gloucester, and several other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest.—From Inhabitants of Cripplegate Within, for the Total Repeal of the Corn Laws.—From Inhabitants of Howdon Pans, against the Reorganization of the Militia.—From Inhabitants of Poor Law Union District of Ballymena, against the Poor Laws (Ireland.)

THE ARMY IN INDIA—COLONEL BUNBURY.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that he wished to call the attention of the noble Earl at the head of the Board of Control, to a mistake which he made the other night when moving the thanks of the House to the army in India. He was sure that the mistake was unintentional, and that the noble Earl had no intention whatever of detracting from the merits of any of the officers who were engaged in those battles. In describing the conduct of the 80th Regiment, his noble Friend said that Colonel Wood, the aide-de-camp of the Governor General, had led that regiment to the storming of a certain fortified post. He (the Duke of Richmond) did not wish to cast the slightest reflection on Colonel Wood, who had been twelve years in the army, and who was the junior Major of the regiment, and who did accompany the 80th in that advance: he believed that he was an officer of great gallantry and promise. But his noble Friend omitted, through mistake, the name of the officer who was really the commanding officer of the corps. If an aide-de-camp galloped in front of a regiment, he was not leading the regiment; it was the officer who was responsible, who did in fact command the regiment, that led it. That commanding officer was Colonel Bunbury, who had been in the army thirty years on full pay, and six years on half-pay. He served in the Peninsula, where he landed in 1808, and remained until the end of the war. He found that he was present at the capture of Oporto, the battle of Talavera, the defence of Tariffa, the battles of the Nive, Nivelles (where he was wounded), and Toulouse. He was also wounded at the recent battle of Moodkee. What he (the Duke of Richmond) wished to remark was, that officers were very sensitive, and naturally too, on these points; and, therefore, he would only ask his noble Friend whether he was correct in stating that Colonel Wood, not Colonel Bunbury, led the regiment? There could be no doubt that Colonel Wood accompanied the regiment. Still, the gallant officer whom he had alluded to, and he himself knew that no better officer ever served in the army, led the regiment on the occasion in question. He, therefore, was sure that his noble Friend would be glad to have the opportunity of stating, as he was sure he would do so, that he believed Colonel Bunbury to be a very good officer, and that he did lead his own regiment.

The EARL of RIPON: His noble Friend, he was sure, acquitted him of having purposely omitted to notice Col. Bunbury's services. He had seen Col. Wood's name in the *Gazette* as having led the regiment, and he had, therefore, given him the credit of having led the regiment, not being at the time aware that he was junior to Colonel Bunbury. If he could have followed his own inclination, he would have mentioned, with becoming praise, the names of all the officers who distinguished them-

selves in those battles. Since he last addressed the House, he had had an opportunity of referring to some additional papers; and he must say, that the effect of their contents on his mind was to convince him that no officer had rendered better service, or better deserved the eulogium even of one so insignificant as he (the Earl of Ripon) must necessarily be on a subject purely professional. He was obliged to his noble Friend for having given him an opportunity of repairing an accidental error, and he begged to express his firm belief in all that could be said in Colonel Bunbury's praise.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 5, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Metropolitan Buildings (No. 2).

3° and passed. Print Works.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Bright, from Fishermen and others inhabiting the Shetland Islands, and from Arthur Anderson, of the City of London, Merchant, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Halsey, from a number of places in the County of Hertford, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Mr. Baine, from Shipowners of the Port of Greenock, for Reduction of Duty on Timber.—By Mr. Hume, from Incorporation of Guildry or Merchants in the City of Brechin, in favour of Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Sir De Lacy Evans, from Churchwardens, Overseers, and Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of St. Martin in the Fields, against Exempting any Parties from the Metropolitan District Asylums.—By Mr. Wilson Patten, from Vicar and Clergy of the Town of Preston, for Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By Mr. Hastie, from Householders of the Borough of Paisley, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Henry Berkeley, from Merchants, Shipowners, and others interested in the Trade of the Port and City of Bristol, for Establishment of Harbours of Refuge.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, and Mr. Heathcote, from a number of places, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Mr. Spooner, from Joshua Toulmin Smith, of No. 1, Hare Court, Inner Temple.—From Inhabitants of Hitchin and its Vicinity, for referring Foreign Disputes to Arbitration.

THE ANDOVER UNION.

Mr. ETWALL regretted that he could not, in deference to the wishes of many hon. Members of that House, postpone his Motion; but he felt that it was one which affected the industrious classes of Andover. He was sure there was but one opinion in that House as to the way in which the Poor Law should be administered—that it should be done with fairness, impartiality, and kindness to the poor, and that those who were the inmates of the Union workhouse should be treated with kindness and indulgence. But that principle had not been acted upon in the case of the Andover Union, and there was now no hope of redress of their grievances for the poor of that Union but by the interference of that House. It was absurd for them to look to the authorities of Somerset-house, or to their own board of guardians. Parliament had delegated enormous and unprecedented powers to the Poor Law Commissioners; and the more trust was reposed in them, the greater was their responsibility to that House and to the country. The Poor Law Commissioners ought ever to be ready, vigilant, and anxious to discover the many abuses that were likely to exist in the Unions, and when discovered, to redress them. But he did not think that the general tenor of the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners in carrying out the Poor Law, had been in accordance with this view, and that more especially in the case of the Andover Union. It was true, that in their letter to Assistant Commissioner Parker, in August, 1845, they studiously said—

"The Commissioners do not doubt that for the sake of arriving at the truth, you will take care the inquiry is complete and full, and that every opportunity for substantiating any well-grounded complaint is afforded to the inmates."

But the question was, whether that suggestion was offered to Mr. Parker in good faith? Of that he would leave the House to judge when he had quoted Mr. Parker's account of a conversation between him and Sir Edmund Head, three or four days before the commencement of the Andover inquiry:—

"Sir Edmund appeared to me to be unusually excited by what he had read in the *Times*, and he expressed a desire that I should exert myself to bring the inquiry to a conclusion with as little delay as possible, in order that the public mind might be quieted."

How were these different statements to be reconciled? The conclusion Mr. Parker came to in his pamphlet was, that the public were not satisfied. Even when the Poor Law Commissioners did institute these investigations, they did not appear anxious to give the public the benefit of them; indeed, they seemed to him to take especial care to conceal them. There was the case of the Hungerford Union, where the master was dismissed, although a majority of the Poor Law guardians voted in his favour. The Poor Law Commissioners took great pains to conceal from the public the result of that inquiry. But at least the authorities of Somerset-house ought to be acquainted with the result of such investigations, although the public were not. It was the duty of the Poor Law Commis-

sioners, if they would administer the Poor Law in a proper manner, to make themselves acquainted with the results of all these examinations. Yet this did not appear to be the case. When the former master of the Andover Union was displaced, Mr. Parker recommended Mr. Price as a fit person to succeed him, and gave him an excellent character. He was not prepared to say that Mr. Parker thought otherwise than well of this person; but it was soon afterwards found that Mr. Price had previously resigned his situation as master of the workhouse at Oxford, which he could no longer hold. Mr. Parker, after he had recommended Mr. Price as temporary master at Andover workhouse, called at Somerset-house, where he saw Mr. Austin. This was Mr. Parker's account of the interview, as given in his pamphlet :—

"When I arrived at the office, I was informed that Mr. Austin, the Assistant Commissioner now in charge of the district comprehending the city of Oxford, was in the office, and accordingly I sought him, and saw him in the presence of Mr. Coode, the Assistant Secretary, and Mr. Sutton. I immediately told him that the object of my seeking him was to ascertain whether he had ever heard anything affecting Mr. Price's character. Mr. Austin replied, 'Why, let me see; no, I do not think I have. Yes, I think there was something; there was some inquiry respecting him, wasn't there?' I replied, 'that I had never heard anything against his character;' and, turning to Mr. Sutton, requested him to get me the papers relating to such inquiry. Mr. Sutton left us to comply with my desire; and after some time he returned and informed me that another clerk had been searching for papers affecting Mr. Price's character, and that no such papers were in existence. Having received this reply, I went to the Commissioners, with whom I found Mr. Austin, who had left me shortly after Mr. Sutton went to look for the papers affecting Mr. Price, when, for the first time in my life, I heard from Mr. Austin, that in July and August, 1844, he had investigated some charges against Mr. Price, whilst master at Oxford; that Mr. Price having resigned his office, he (Mr. Austin) had not sent the papers to the Commissioners; and that he then attended with the papers, having received a note from Mr. Lewis, requesting him to bring them with him."

Mr. Parker stated, that then for the first time he had heard of the charges against Price, the temporary master appointed at his suggestion; and the papers relative to the inquiry which took place in the Oxford Union relative to those charges were not sent to the Commissioners till a considerable period had elapsed. That was a singular instance of negligence on the part of those authorities. The Poor Law Commissioners themselves acknowledged that the result of inquiries was not specially recorded at Somerset-house. The Assistant Commissioners, in discharging their duties, should act on sound precedents; and in no way could they learn the proper mode of administering the Poor Laws in the rural districts so well as by making themselves acquainted with the different abuses which had occurred in different Unions. The course pursued in the present case was, in his opinion, most objectionable, most inefficient, and by no means calculated to effect the object of the inquiry. An Assistant Poor Law Commissioner must naturally have a leaning to those laws of which he was an administrator; and any error or flaw in those laws must appear to him less objectionable than to another party. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would take this point into his consideration, and that provision would be made for having such inquiries presided over by an impartial authority—by some one in no way mixed up with the administration of the law. He now came to the disgusting and degrading system of bone-crushing which existed in the Andover Union. The right hon. Baronet had offered to produce the Papers connected with this inquiry; bnt he must be allowed to express his surprise that those Papers had not been published immediately after the investigation was concluded. He had no doubt the right hon. Baronet would be able to explain that passage of Mr. Parker's pamphlet, in which reference was made to a conversation which the right hon. Baronet upon the minutes which had been in possession of the right hon. Baronet. In consequence of what fell from the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley), an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner was despatched to Andover, for the purpose of making inquiry into the system of bone-gnawing, which was pursued there. That system had been brought before the board of guardians, by Mr. Mundy, a guardian and a magistrate, and in conjunction with two other guardians he had examined ten paupers as to the practice. Subsequently to the inquiries made by Mr. Mundy, Mr. Parker, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, went for the first time; but, before proceeding further he should read Mr. Mundy's account of his investigations. The hon. Member then read the following document :—

"Mr. Mundy stated, upon oath, that, accompanied by two guardians and medical men, he examined ten paupers; all, with the exception of two, admitted that they were constantly in the habit of eating the marrow and gristle from the

bones. They eat it from old bones, meaning those that had some moisture remaining in them, but still were in a state of decomposition; and some had been in heaps two or three months—they eat it from these as well as from the fresh ones."

Some of these bones were in a state of decomposition, having lain in the workhouse yard for two or three months; and though it was supposed to be the principle of the Andover Union that dry bones alone should be crushed, yet there was no instance on record where fresh and clean bones were furnished, whether received from a distance or collected in Andover and the adjoining villages.

"When a beef bone, or chine bone, was turned out of the heap, there was a scramble for it, described like a parcel of dogs, and the man who got it was obliged to run away and hide it until he had an opportunity of eating the marrow. One man fetched two bones, which he had eaten that very morning in wet ashes; a portion of muscle very offensive was adhering to the ends of the bone. The men said that it was a considerable time before they could make up their minds to do so, but after they had once taken to it they preferred that description of labour to any other, because they could get bones to pick."

It was somewhat singular that the master of the Union workhouse should for a moment have tolerated the horrible practice which was in existence. But it was not less singular that the guardians, whose duty it was to visit the House, never interfered. Certain it was, the visiting Committee once, in the heat of summer, did stop the bone-crushing, but they stopped it because the effluvia was so offensive. After they once made up their minds in favour of that mode of employment, they preferred it to any other. The men who were examined by Mr. Mundy spoke of a deficiency of bread; and from Mr. Mundy's statement, which was corroborated by Aaron Astrick, now a labourer, who last year was an inmate of Andover workhouse, it appeared that the paupers gnawed the bones, and dug up all the potatoes that remained after the crop was taken off the ground. Mr. Parker took Mr. Mundy's examination, but did not inform Mr. Mundy that he was going to hold an inquiry into the bone-crushing; and it was a singular fact that out of the ten men originally examined at the workhouse, only two were examined by Mr. Parker; and one man whom Mr. Mundy had particularly pointed out as able to afford great information upon the subject of the bones was never examined at all. The bone-dust was disposed of by a kind of mock auction; the greater part was bought by the guardians, and the transaction was not a profitable one for the ratepayers. For men to be engaged in this horrible occupation of bone-crushing was bad enough; but what would the House say to the employment of boys of thirteen in the same disgusting work, and that too principally in summer and autumn, because there were then fewer able-bodied labourers in the House? The bones were broken in wooden mortars bound with iron; the boys stood opposite each other, and their united strength was used to raise the crusher. They requested more provisions, and they received half an allowance extra of bread. To employ boys in crushing bones, and to give them an extra quantity of food, were express violations of the rules of the Poor Law Commissioners. By Article 21 paupers were ordered to be employed on work according to their capacity or ability, and paupers were prohibited from receiving any compensation for their labour. He now approached a part of the subject which he would not have brought under the notice of the House had he not ascertained that the facts of the case, which he could at first hardly think credible, and was to the last reluctant to believe, admitted of no doubt. For the last three or four years there had been a new church building in Andover on the site of an old one, and the burial-ground had been much interfered with. When the foundation of the new church was dug, quantities of bones were thrown up, and among these there was a quantity of human bones. They were bought by a farmer in the neighbourhood to manure his meadow land. A portion of these bones was most properly buried; but another portion was sold to the collector of bones in Andover, and by him sold to the workhouse. It was well known that they were human bones. There were several persons in the workhouse sufficiently acquainted with the difference between the bones of horses and of men to detect the kind which in this instance had been procured. The attention of the porter was directed to the subject: he went and saw they were human bones. It was singular that the master of the workhouse alone should be ignorant, especially as a part of a skeleton was suspended in the workhouse yard. An inquiry was ordered into the circumstance. No man in Andover was consulted as to the mode of inquiry into this matter; no public notice was given on this subject. The questions were put by the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner. Others were

suggested by the master of the workhouse; but no statement was made by the men themselves; and he was in a condition to prove that several witnesses who were examined in the course of the inquiry were afraid to make an unreserved statement of facts in their knowledge. He only regretted that such occurrences should have taken place in a Union with which he was connected. He found in the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, for 1834, a passage in which fictitious modes of employment in the workhouses were condemned as pernicious contrivances, on account both of their effects on the minds of the paupers, and their tendency to excite sympathy in behalf of the indolent. He had every reason to believe that the right hon. Baronet was opposed to this mode of employing the paupers; but he (Mr. Etwall) had noticed the bone-crushing to show what was the state of affairs in the Andover Union. He considered it absolutely necessary, with a view to the proper administration of the Poor Laws, that a Select Committee of this House should be appointed to look into the different modes of conducting the affairs of the Union. That Augean stable must be cleansed. He should not go into a lengthened detail as to the second Andover inquiry, because his object in making this Motion was not to displace any officer of that establishment, but to exhibit the system of management there, and to show that the Poor Law Commissioners, in stopping the inquiry, had not gone fairly into the evils of the system. Mr. Westlake, who first brought forward a complaint on the state of matters in the Andover Union, had been the medical officer of the Union for a number of years. No fault had ever been found with him by the board of guardians for any neglect, and his salary had been raised, with the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners. Mr. Westlake had for two years previously suspected that the sick and aged were not receiving their due allowances; and in May, 1842, suggested a more efficient system for checking such irregularities. He proposed that a weekly ticket should be given to the paupers, so that they might each know how much they were to get, and that a book should be kept to register the orders. The book was ordered to be got, but not so the tickets; because the master said they would make him the slave of the paupers. In May, 1845, the medical book, which had been ordered by the Commissioners in May, 1842, was first introduced—a delay which was somewhat surprising, when one of the instructions to the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner was, that they should pay particular attention to the medical reports. It might be asked why Mr. Westlake had not brought the matters which had led to inquiry before the board of guardians. His reason was, that unless he had very strong and all-convincing ground on which to proceed, it would be impossible to get the guardians to think it credible that his statements were founded on reality. He thought the master of the workhouse had so great a sway over the minds of the guardians, that even for him (the medical officer) it would be presumptuous to press the matter on the consideration of that body. He saw the chairman, who thanked him for his zeal, and recommended him to pursue the inquiry. The chairman even hinted that he thought it desirable the master should resign. Why the chairman and the board of guardians should afterwards, in the course of a few days, become so determinedly hostile to this inquiry, it was not for him to divine; he should rather suppose that the board of guardians would have considered it their duty most impartially and zealously to inquire into every allegation brought against the master of depriving the poor of that Union of their extra allowances. The master was accused of fraudulently withholding and misappropriating the allowances of the paupers; he should refer to same cases elucidating these facts, and they should be those which appeared to be the most readily sustained. These cases had been given in *The Times* newspaper; the reason he alluded to this was, because that journal had been accused of systematic misrepresentation in the reports it had given of this inquiry. Now he (Mr. Etwall) had been present during the whole of the inquiry, and he would distinctly say, that a more faithful or correct narration of everything that transpired before the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner could not be given than that furnished by *The Times*. The first case that he would take was that of Richard Smith; he was in the house with a broken leg, and he received nothing but the ordinary diet, except beer during the last week. William Norris, seventy-six years of age, was in the house twenty-one days, and the ratepayers were charged with those extras which, as an old man, he was entitled to, viz., one ounce of tea, half-pound of sugar, half-pound of butter, and three pints of ale weekly; he did not receive them. This

man's wife died in the workhouse, and the ratepayers were debited with her allowance for three days after her death. He also adduced the cases of Sarah Wells and — Lashley. If there should be any doubt that these frauds were practised on the sick, infirm, and aged paupers, it was clearly proved that, in the quarter ending December 20, 1845, when the contracts were executed at the same price, and when the dietary was the same as in previous years, the decreased expense of keeping each pauper was, compared with former years, 5*d.* per day; thus proving that the ratepayers were benefited at the expense of the paupers. He should not go into the charges of immorality brought against the master. It was one of the rules of the Poor Law Commissioners that the keys of the workhouse should be delivered by the porter to the master at nine o'clock every evening; it was proved, and that by persons not too ready to give evidence of such matters, that the master of the workhouse was almost invariably drunk on Saturday nights. A publican of Andover stated that, on one occasion when the master was drunk, the matron sent her son to bring him back; the son did not return, and she then sent the porter; he did not return either, and she then went herself; after her arrival they were seen to leave the public-house, and they all arrived at the workhouse a little before one o'clock in the morning. He asked who, in the meantime, had been entrusted with the regulation of the affairs of the House? It appeared that for several winters past the master had of his own accord established what were called broth-days; this broth was made from the liquor in which the meat had been boiled the day preceding; the inmates received this broth, and those who received it were, on those days, deprived of their cheese; and when the aged and infirm had the broth, they had neither beer nor cheese. In the summer season they had the broth for supper, and then the same species of fraud was practised. There were many other cases in which the dietary of the workhouse was not properly given. An immense quantity of butter was saved by the skimmings of the bacon being given in lieu of it. In the course of the inquiry it was stated by one witness that there was a difficulty in getting hot water, and that they were often forced to drink cold; to this it was replied, that there was always a sufficient supply of hot water, and that sometimes the paupers were allowed to put salt in their water, which was called a luxury. It appeared that the quantity of milk charged was 1,250 pints; the quantity used was 950 pints; so that by the master's own account there were 300 pints remaining due. Very little attention was paid to keeping the books; the master appeared to sum up his accounts in a very extraordinary manner, and it was unintelligible how he arrived at his sums total. He was asked upon what he founded his calculation of the quantity of beer used; he said he could not take the trouble to keep an accurate account, and that every week he charged the quantity according to what he thought was the sound of the cask! It appeared that the inhabitants of Andover had been accustomed to subscribe for a dinner to the inmates of the workhouse on Christmas-day; from the liberality of the subscription there had always been a residue left, which was deposited in the hands of the master for the use of the poor. A few days before Christmas, 1844, the master addressed the inmates of the house, stating he very much regretted that the inhabitants of Andover were so poor they had not been able to make up a sufficient subscription to give them a dinner; but he proposed that they should give their rations of beef on the Tuesday, that a certain quantity should be taken from the allowances of the children, and that these should be appropriated to the dinner at Christmas. It was stated that the beef, and the materials for the pudding, were derived from the subscription, consequently the master defrauded the inmates of the house out of one meat dinner. The Poor Law Commissioners stopped this inquiry when the master resigned; but they still left charges pending that had not been inquired into up to the present moment, several of these being charges which the Commissioners had given Mr. Westlake to understand would be inquired into. One was of harsh and cruel treatment of the children by the master and mistress, and obtaining of the contractors meat, candles, &c., at the expense of the ratepayers. By the order of the Poor Law Commissioners, at every weekly meeting of the board of guardians, the master must bring an estimate of the stock required for the ensuing week, which estimate must be inserted in the provision book; check-books were to be kept, signed by the chairman, with counter checks, signed by the clerk to the Union. This arrangement was not carried into effect at Andover; these check-books were never filled up for a week after

the goods were brought in and consumed. It was intended that one of these check-books should be given to the contractors, so that when they applied for payment, they might be produced and checked. The mode of doing business at Andover was very different: there, an order given by the master to a tradesman, one of the contractors, was entered into his pocket-book with merely the initials of the master placed under the order. But in addition to the order for what was the weekly consumption of the house, there was also an order for the master's own use, of a quarter of a pound of tea at 5*s.*, the union tea being only 3*s.* 4*d.*—a quarter of a pound of coffee at 2*s.*; two pound of fresh butter; two and a half pound of loaf sugar; and one pound of mould candles; and it appeared this was deducted from the quantity which the poor ought to have received; thus, the tea and coffee were taken from the 28 ounces of tea with which the Union ought to have been supplied, the poor receiving only 19 ounces; instead of 14 lb. of candles, the Union received only 12 lb.; and so on in proportion; this system existing during the whole of the contract of this individual; and in the same way with the contractor who succeeded him. But, in addition, there was this particular and special fraud—the tea was sent to the workhouse, made up in half-ounce packets, the sugar in packets of half a pound each. These were usually returned and exchanged for tea and coffeee of a better quality for the master's own use. In one week there were returned in these small parcels, 4 lb. of sugar and half a pound of tea, which had been supplied for the use of the paupers. During that quarter, also, the master received 70¾ lb. of pork and brisket, and 12½ lb. of Chedder cheese, deducted from the quantity sent for the use of the house. From 90 lb. of cheese at 5½*d.* per lb. ordered for the poor, the master had 12½ lb. of Cheddar at 9*d.*, so that the paupers, instead of receiving 90 lb., received only 71 lb. The board of guardians were bound to administer the Poor Law to the letter of the Act, especially with respect to cases of relief. A poor man who was employed in the workhouse, and whose family were supported by his labour, on his return home one night, accidentally told an inhabitant of Andover that he had seen an inmate of the workhouse eating a raw potato. This was reported by the person, and reached the ears of the relieving officer. The man was had up, and asked if he had said this; he replied he had, and he was then dismissed; told there was no more work for him, and that if his family wanted relief they might come into the workhouse. He thought the Andover board of guardians ought to have been particularly scrupulous as to the way in which their books were kept, as there had been an instance in which one of the officers connected with that Union had embezzled upwards of 2,000*l.* He had given bonds; but with respect to them there was rather a curious circumstance: the first bond for 1,000*l.* had been destroyed, and another for 500*l.* substituted without the knowledge of the guardians; the consequence was that the parish of Andover lost upwards of 200*l.* There was another point, viz., that relative to the way in which witnesses had been paid, to which it was desirable attention should be drawn. It had been the most extraordinary and irregular mode of payment of which he had ever heard. There was one particular case—that of Mr. March, a carrier at Stockbridge, who had been employed to go to Andover, and he was stated to have been at the inquiry three days, and to have received only the sum of 16*s.* 6*d.* Another case was that of the servant of Mr. M'Dougal's son-in-law, Mr. Chainlout, who received for twelve days' attendance a mere pittance, 7*s.* Another man, for an attendance over the same period, received a still smaller sum, only 2*s.* Both of the latter were resident in Andover. [Sir J. Graham: Who paid it?] It was paid, he believed, by the Commissioners at Somerset-house; and there were other witnesses, to whom Mr. Westlake had advanced money with the approbation of the Poor Law Commissioners, money which up to the present moment remained unrepaid. Some of Mr. Westlake's witnesses who were not examined, received nothing at all; while other witnesses, not those of that gentleman, were amply paid. He (Mr. Etwall) had now endeavoured to convey to the House a statement of the way in which the Andover Poor Law Union had been conducted, and of the very extraordinary faults and errors which had been committed there. He conceived that nothing could be more detrimental to the principle of the Poor Laws themselves, than that the execution of them should in any way be permitted to be harsh and tyrannical. He was of opinion that nothing could more injure the effective working of the law than to conduct an inquiry, entered into in consequence of the charges made by inmates of a Union work-

house, in a suspicious or suppressed manner, or to stop such an inquiry until fairly and completely investigated. The Poor Law of 1834 had been recommended by the Commissioners as a measure likely to alleviate the condition of the unfortunate people in workhouses; he trusted that generally, elsewhere, such had been the result; but that the fact was directly the reverse in Andover none could doubt. He hoped that the importance of the subject, and the responsibility which he considered had devolved upon him in bringing forward a Motion of this nature, would be his excuse in having trespassed at such length on the attention of the House. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Poor Laws in the Andover Union, and into the management of the Union Workhouse."

SIR J. GRAHAM: I confess, Sir, I cannot help thinking that it is melancholy, at the present juncture, and in the existing state of public affairs, so much of the precious time of this House should have been consumed in a matter which after all is only, I was about to call it, a workhouse squabble in the south of England. But as the hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding the appeal made to him, has thought it right to occupy so much time, by going into the whole facts of the case, it will be my duty very shortly to follow him in reference to some of the topics he has dwelt upon at so much length. And, first, I must observe that I am not here to vindicate the management of the Andover board of guardians, or their conduct with reference to the greater portion of the transactions of which he speaks. With reference, however, to the practices which were alleged to prevail in the Andover Union, it will be recollected that the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley) first stated a transaction which produced the deepest impression on the feelings of the House, with respect to the employment of the paupers in that Union, in the crushing of bones. I need not remind the House, that on several antecedent occasions, I had in my place expressed the strongest opinion opposed to this particular mode of employment in workhouses. More than once I was called on to state my opinion on this point by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Brighton (Captain Pechell), and repeatedly I have declared I regretted, that in so many Unions throughout the south of England, this particular mode of employment was pertinaciously adhered to. The hon. Member for Finsbury having mentioned a particular transaction as having occurred at Andover, I thought it my duty to call the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners to that statement. I expressed my wish that a full inquiry should be instituted. The hon. Member, in making his Motion, referred to the Report of the Commission of 1833, in which the Commissioners expressed their view with respect to the impropriety of this species of labour in workhouses; and to the principle contained in that Report I give my ready assent. I do think it desirable that the labour of paupers in workhouses shall not be of a penal or of a repulsive character. I do think—I have always thought—that the crushing of bones violates that principle, and is therefore objectionable. Something has been said with respect to the suppression of the substance of the inquiry instituted in consequence of my representations to the Board of Commissioners at Somerset-house following the statement made by the hon. Member for Finsbury. The statement was made towards the close of the Session. The inquiry was not concluded until, I think, within three or four days of the Prorogation; and instead of producing the evidence taken by the Assistant Commissioner with regard to this individual transaction, on the last day of the Session, I stated in my place that an inquiry had been instituted, and the facts which the hon. Member for Finsbury had represented to the House were, in the main, accurately stated. So far from vindicating that transaction, I have considered it as confirmatory of my preconceived opinion; and when asked by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Brighton what measures had been taken as resulting from that investigation, I had the pleasure of stating to the House that by a general order of the Poor Law Commissioners, dated the 1st of January last, notwithstanding much remonstrance from nearly 100 Unions, in which this particular mode of employment had been adopted, it has been suppressed; and although I think in ten or twelve cases the general order has been suspended, on special grounds, for three months, yet from the 1st of April next, within three weeks of the present time, the bone-crushing will, throughout these Unions, entirely cease, and never, I hope, be revived. Before applying myself to other parts of the speech of the hon. Gentleman, I must beg leave to draw the attention of the House to this

remarkable fact, that all the abuses of which he has complained are incident to local management, and not in the least chargeable on the Board of Central Authority entrusted with the administration of the Poor Law as it now exists in this country; and I would now state to the House shortly what, as I understand, were the principal complaints made of the management of the workhouse at Andover—the local management, as I have already stated, in which the abuses originated. In addition to other objections to the particular mode of pauper employment complained of, I have always thought it was liable to the very abuse which the hon. Member for Andover has stated existed in that Union, namely, that the fruits of this labour, which was in itself objectionable, might give rise to local jobbing, the guardians employing paupers in crushing bones, becoming themselves the purchasers of the bone dust, and applying it to their own use. I repeat, therefore, that on every ground—on account of the objectionable nature of the employment itself, and the local abuses to which it gives rise—I am strongly of opinion that this mode of occupation for paupers in workhouses ought entirely to cease; and already, as I have stated, effectual measures have been taken for the suppression of that mode of employment, and with the suppression of the employment the cessation of the grievance. But the bone-crushing was only one of many other abuses. The hon. Gentleman described at great length the insufficiency of the dietary in the Andover workhouse. I have to state to the House that in consequence of the inquiry instituted by the Commissioners, a material alteration in the dietary has, by special order, taken place, and one additional meat-day in the week, instead of the lower diet, has been substituted for the dietary that before prevailed. Then again, as to the master of the workhouse: he was appointed by the local guardians; he was sustained by the authority of the Commissioners. An inquiry was instituted on the spot into the conduct of the master. During the progress of that inquiry the governor tendered his resignation; his resignation was accepted. The Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, upon the resignation of the master, did make a recommendation of a successor, which was objectionable; and when the Poor Law Commissioners ascertained that that recommendation could not, with propriety, be sanctioned, they withheld their approbation, and a new master was appointed, sanctioned by the Poor Law Commissioners, against whose conduct I have not heard any complaint. I have referred to three heads of abuses: first, the bone-crushing—that has ceased; next, the insufficiency of the dietary—that has been remedied; and the conduct of the master—who has been removed, and another appointed, against whom no charge has been made. This is not all: a complaint has been made of the gross misconduct which beyond all doubt existed in this Union, by the medical officer. I have no doubt that medical officer first made the representation to the hon. Member for Finsbury; his representation was strictly true; I believe by making that representation he did give offence to the board of guardians, and attempts were made to displace that medical officer; the Commissioners at Somerset-house, who have the veto on the displacement of all officers in the Union, have disapproved of it, and therefore, the person who gave the information has not suffered on that account. Then, again, among the other complaints which were investigated at the inquiry before the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, was one that the number of relieving officers of the union was insufficient. That evil so complained of has also been redressed, and an additional relieving officer has been appointed to the Andover Union. I know not that I have omitted referring to any grievance which was the subject of inquiry, excepting one, and that was with reference to the insufficient audit of the accounts. Beyond all question, until last year I was quite of opinion that the audit of Poor Law accounts in the various Unions was not satisfactory. I introduced in the course of last Session a measure generally redressing that evil, by the appointment, not of local, but of district auditors—persons of much higher station, and more competent to conduct inquiries into matters of accounts than those who have hitherto performed that function. The Andover Union now partakes of that benefit, and henceforth district, not local, auditors shall be appointed. The hon. Member for Andover has complained of the mode in which the second inquiry has been conducted. I do not stand here to vindicate the mode in which that inquiry was conducted. I certainly, myself—judging only from what I saw from time to time of the daily proceedings before that inquiry—am of opinion that good judgment was not displayed in the mode of conducting it. I do not say that the re-

moval of Mr. Parker from his situation arose entirely from the mode in which that inquiry was conducted; but, be that as it may, these abuses having existed in the district without being reported to the Commissioners, and the inquiry not being satisfactory to the country, and from other matters which have since arisen, the Poor Law Commissioners thought it their painful duty to remove Mr. Parker from his office. Sir, I do not know, if I occupied the time of the House more at length, I could state anything more satisfactory on the different heads of complaint alleged. I have not the slightest desire to keep back any portion of the evidence which has been already obtained with respect to this case. I do think it will be highly desirable, that all the papers connected with the inquiry should be in their hands, and be duly considered by them before they appoint a Committee further to investigate the facts. I, therefore, beg leave, as an Amendment—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—'there be laid before this House, a Copy of Mr. Parker's Report, and of the Evidence taken by him with reference to the crushing of bones in the Andover Union Workhouse, together with a Copy of all Evidence taken on the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. M'Dougall, and a Copy of all Correspondence between the Poor Law Commissioners and the Board of Guardians of the Andover Union or their Officers, from the 1st day of September 1845 to the 1st day of March 1846, instead thereof."

MR. FERRAND submitted that it was not competent to the right hon. Baronet to move such an Amendment. He had himself given notice of an Amendment at the sitting of the House, and he therefore claimed priority to the right hon. Baronet.

THE SPEAKER said, it was perfectly competent to the right hon. Baronet to move an Amendment without giving notice. Having immediately followed the hon. Member for Andover, the right hon. Baronet was perfectly free to move any Amendment, without reference to any priority of notice that might have been given by any other Member.

Amendment accordingly put.

MR. WAKLEY believed he was in a position to speak both on the original Motion and on the Amendment. He thought it extremely desirable that the House should be in possession of the Papers referred to; and it appeared to him that if there was no objection, the best way of dealing with the subject under discussion would be to adjourn the present debate for three weeks or a month, until those Papers were in the possession of the House. And there were reasons for so doing, of which, probably, the House was not aware. There was already, it should be known, a Committee of the House sitting, and of which he had the honour to be a Member, inquiring into the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners with reference to the appointment of district asylums in the metropolis. The demands which that Committee was making on the Commissioners occupied the time of the clerks in their office to a great extent, and hitherto they had found the greatest difficulties in furnishing the immense mass of information which the Committee required. It had, so far, been sitting on two days in the week; and he could with confidence assure the House that, if the Committee now asked for were appointed to-morrow, it would be found utterly impossible for the Poor Law Commissioners to devote to it the requisite attention for six weeks to come. If it were desirable at all that the House should have the information which the right hon. Gentleman in his Amendment pointed out, it would also be an advantage to be made acquainted, as fully as possible, with all the facts of the case before they proceeded to any further discussion, because they might now rest assured that all the power of the Government would be brought to bear against the Motion of the hon. Member for Andover. He (Mr. Wakley) felt that if ever there came before the House a subject which demanded from it the most careful investigation it was the present. Since he had been in Parliament there had come under his observation no case which more loudly than that under discussion had called for the scrutiny and strict examination into it of the Legislature; and he felt confident that when the right hon. Gentleman had maturely reflected upon the attendant circumstances, and had well weighed the importance of the facts contained in the Papers which had been moved for, the right hon. Baronet would declare himself of the same opinion. The right hon. Gentleman had not, in his opinion, given to the subject that consideration and attention which, thoroughly to comprehend its bearings, was necessary, and that inference was deduced from the observation marking the commencement of the right hon. Baronet's speech. The remark was, that they could only look upon the matter as merely a "workhouse squabble," and

that it was melancholy to reflect upon so important a measure as that which had so long been engaging the care of the Government being obstructed by a Motion so trifling as that of the hon Member. Now, he fully admitted the immense and primary importance of the measure upon which they had been deliberating; and he himself had refused to undertake the responsibility of interrupting even for a moment the passage of that measure by any Motion of any kind. He had refused to do so because he knew that the country was becoming indignant at the manner in which the measure had been treated by the House; and he most sincerely believed, that if hon. Gentlemen opposite were aware of the sufferings which their opposition was entailing upon the trading classes in the community, they would at once withdraw and regret their hostility. But the cause of obstruction was something more than "a workhouse squabble." The Poor Law Commissioners had been officially in existence since 1834; there was in them vested a vast and extraordinary authority; and their powers, which were not incorrectly described as unconstitutional powers, had been exercised without interference or question for ten years. Until that moment nothing had ever been brought forward in reference to the manner in which the Poor Law Commissioners had fulfilled the duties of their office; and now that circumstances connected with those duties, and with which circumstances the public were already familiar, were alluded to, it was the business of the House to consent to and to further every investigation which could elucidate information relative to the officers of whom mention had been made. And this should be done not only with a view to do justice in the matter more immediately under consideration, but also with reference to future legislation. It could not be, with any propriety, therefore, termed "a workhouse squabble." An investigation had taken place: was the result satisfactory? The right hon. Gentleman stated that various abuses had been corrected, and that the dietary in workhouses had been improved; but did the House know this sufficiently? Bone-crushing, they knew from the same authority, had been abolished, and Mr. M'Dougal had been removed; but was there not something behind? Why, it was a matter that had extended its influence to Somerset-house; that had led to the dismissal of an Assistant Commissioner, who for ten years had performed the duties of his post without any of the expressed dissatisfaction of his employers. The guardians themselves were before the House as petitioners, praying for the inquiry asked for by the hon. Member. Mr. Mundy and Mr. Soper, both guardians, and Mr. Westlake, the medical officer to the Union, prayed for an inquiry. Mr. Soper distinctly declared that the board of guardians were conspiring to remove the medical officer, in consequence of that officer having been the man to bring to light the atrocious evils which were now known to have existed in the Andover Union. Would the House of Commons of England be the abettors in such an outrageous act as that? It should also be remembered that the Commissioners were involved in the inquiry. Mr. Parker complained of them, and they complained of Mr, Parker; nobody was satisfied, and every body affirmed and admitted that the inquiry which had been instituted had been prematurely concluded, and was incomplete. M'Dougal complained that the hasty termination put to that inquiry had deprived him of all opportunity of having his witnesses heard, and of rebutting the heinous charges brought against him. The Commissioners had done some of the most unconstitutional and unjust things ever heard of. Allegations were made to them by one of the guardians relative to the bone-crushing, bone-gnawing, and marrow-eating from corrupt and putrid bones; that complaint was brought by him before the House, and a question was put to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department whether he had been made aware of such having been the case. An immediate inquiry was instituted, and Mr. Parker was despatched to Andover. On the 8th of August the right hon. Gentleman acknowledged that he was justified for having called attention to the subject, and promised on the following day to communicate the facts to the House. Out of that had arisen a second investigation; and what was the result? Mr. Parker, when at Andover, informed the Commissioners that certain allegations against the governor of the workhouse there, as to the manner in which he had treated the inmates of the establishment, had been made; and the Commissioners then had done that which was totally without a precedent in similar transactions. They, acting on their own responsibility, and dealing with public money, compelled the medical officer of the

workhouse to appear before the public as the accuser of another officer of the same Union, and, from the first, throwing upon him the entire duty of finding funds, and bringing up the witnesses. From that extraordinary duty, devolved upon him so unwisely, and in a manner so strongly calculated to bring down odium upon the Commissioners, the medical officer had not flinched; the inquiry was proceeded with, and the witnesses examined; and then Mr. Parker interrupted it by announcing that justice demanded that the governor of the workhouse should have time afforded to him of procuring witnesses in his defence. But, when so informed, the Commissioners sent back Mr. Parker to Andover, and compelled him to continue the investigation, and to go at once into the charges affecting the character, and, it might be found, the life of the governor. No one, therefore, was satisfied. And the House, considering the powers exercised by the Commissioners —powers entrusted to no other body of men in the country, superior to the authority of Parliament itself, because enabling them to suspend an Act of the Legislature —considering these extraordinary facts, the House could not be too jealous of the manner in which such an authority was exercised. He entreated the right hon. Gentleman to withdraw his opposition, and to reflect upon the feelings which would be excited among the poor when it was found that in a case where their interests were so strongly affected, neglect only was apparent. The Assistant Commissioner was the last man who should have been appointed to conduct the inquiry at Andover; for whatever was the result, it would come to the public invested with suspicion, when it was known that Mr. Parker had had the best reasons in the world to withhold a verdict unfavourable to the authorities, simply because that gentleman had been inquiring and reporting upon evils which it was his duty to see should not have existed. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would ask leave of the House to make his Amendment a substantial Motion, and use his influence in seeing every facility given to the prosecuting of the inquiry.

MR. CHRISTIE believed that the right hon. Gentleman had, on a previous occasion, regarded and spoken of the subject under discussion in a very different light, and had not even dreamed of terming it a mere "workhouse squabble." The special instructions sent by the Commissioners to Mr. Parker contained an acknowledgment of "the serious nature" of the case. By the same post went private orders from Sir Edmund Head, with an explanation of the reasons of their transmission, which explanation was, that he (Sir E. Head) had seen the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham), and had heard from him that he considered it as a very "serious matter." At length, when inquiry was granted, everything had been done to render that investigation illusory, and worse than useless; yet now, when a Motion was brought forward in that House for the appointment of a Committee, the right hon. Baronet stood up and moved as an Amendment, that all Papers relating to the subject be laid upon the Table of the House. It was, doubtless, well known to every hon. Member who heard him, that the right hon. Baronet made a proposition of that nature at an earlier part of those proceedings, or rather at an earlier period of the present Session, and that was assigned to the hon. Member for Andover as a reason why he should postpone his Motion. But now, it might very fairly be asked, why had not those Papers been produced long ago? The principal portion of the documents to which he referred had been prepared many months ago; and he could not understand how Members could get up in that House and say that they ought to accept the presentation of Papers in lieu of the investigations of a Committee. He did not wish to utter anything unparliamentary; but it did appear to him that the proposition which came from the other side amounted to what might be called a juggle, and he would even add a juggle prepense. What was the state of the case? Papers were now offered to them, though it was obviously too late to turn those Papers to any useful account. If the documents had long since been laid before Parliament, hon. Members could have judged for themselves; but now, with a show of candour which was of no avail, he offered the Papers to the House when the thing really wanted was a close and searching investigation by means of a Committee. They all knew that there had been a special inquiry made into the subject of bone-crushing; and the hon. Member for Andover told them, that when that inquiry took place, the right hon. Baronet promised them a Committee. On the 5th of August a written Report, accompanied by the depositions, was sent up to London from Andover, and those Papers were, on the 7th of August, placed in the hands of the right hon. Baronet.

Mr. Parker, by desire of Sir J. Graham, called at the Home-office. During that interview Sir E. Head was announced, and, having been admitted, took a part in the conversation. Upon the last day of the Session the right hon. Baronet told the hon. Member for Finsbury that an inquiry had been made on the subject of the bone-crushing, and the result of that showed that some of the paupers had eaten meat from some of the bones which had been given them to crush; but so soon as that fact was discovered, directions were given that the paupers addicted to the practice should no longer be employed in the work of bone-crushing; the directions were, that paupers of depraved appetites and dirty habits, or of weak intellect, should no longer be so employed. But let it be recollected that at the time when Sir James Graham made that communication he had had in his possession for more than two days the report made by Mr. Parker. Now, that report went much further than the statement of the right hon. Baronet. Mr. Parker, in his report, stated that paupers of weak intellect and depraved appetites had been allowed to eat horse-flesh. The statement upon this subject was made in the following words:—

"Amongst the bones supplied to the workhouse by the bone-gatherers, many are fresh from the kitchens of the gentry; and the inmates, as well as persons who have been inmates, acknowledge having picked out such fresh bones, and eaten the marrow from them. It also appears that when there has been meat left on the bones, some of the inmates have partaken of it. All the witnesses, excepting Green, state that the meat was never eaten unless it was fresh and good; but Green declares that Reeves and Eaton, two inmates, partook of horseflesh found on bones purchased from the dog-kennel, and he avows that he has frequently eaten stale and stinking meat from beef and mutton bones. The man Reeves, whose intellects were of the lowest order, died some time since; and Eaton is an idiot of dirty habits and depraved appetite; the character of his appetite is so well known that care is taken to prevent him from gaining access to the bone store and from going to the hog-tub. It is due to the workhouse officers to observe, that immediately it was mentioned to them that horseflesh had been eaten by one of the inmates, the statement was inquired into by the medical officer, and its truth denied by Reeves, the inmate said to have eaten it."

So much for the statement of facts as regarded the conduct as well as the treatment of the paupers; but the facts relating to the conduct and treatment of Mr. Parker still remained to be examined; and he thought it extremely probable that the House would agree with him in considering that Mr. Parker had something to complain of—that he had a right to complain that his own conduct had been judged of upon evidence taken in a loose and unsatisfactory manner. He would read to the House a memorandum of the conversation which took place between Mr. Parker and Sir James Graham, when the former called at the Home-office by desire of Sir James. Mr. Parker assured him (Mr. Christie) that the memorandum to which he referred was substantially correct; that it was made immediately after the conversation closed; and that his recollection had not since then furnished him with any additional particulars which could in any respect be considered material:—

"After adverting to the facts disclosed in the depositions, Sir James observed, 'I have stated in the House of Commons that the Commissioners cannot prevent the boards of guardians from employing the inmates of workhouses at this bone-crushing; I was right in saying so, was I not?'

"Mr. Parker: I think not; I have no doubt whatever that the Commissioners possess authority to issue regulations by which such labour may be put on a proper footing.

"Sir James: Is that so? Are you sure you are right?

"Mr. Parker: I am very confident in my opinion.

"Sir Edmund Head, one of the Poor Law Commissioners, was announced, and Sir James Graham repeated to him what he had said in the House of Commons respecting the powers of boards of guardians to employ the inmates of workhouses in bone-crushing; adding, 'Mr. Parker says he thinks the Commissioners have power to control this kind of labour.'

"Sir Edmund: I think we can do so, but—

"Sir James: I do not like this kind of employment in workhouses; we shall have some confounded disturbance about it.

"Sir Edmund: I am sorry to hear you say so.

"Sir James: Yes; this case will be stock-in-trade for *The Times* for the next six months; but you have not countenanced this description of labour, have you?

"Sir Edmund: No, but we have not discouraged it.

"Mr. Parker, handing Sir Edmund a copy of the Commissioners' order requiring wayfarers and such casual paupers to break a certain quantity of bones before leaving the Andover workhouse, in a return for a night's lodging and food, said, 'In the cases of mendicants, such labour has been directed by an order of the Commissioners, upon the certificate of the surgeon that it was innocuous.'

"Sir James (taking the paper from Sir Edmund), 'Is that so?—why it makes the case worse.'

"Sir Edmund observed, that he regretted that Sir James entertained such an opinion, and that he did not think such labour could be abandoned without giving offence to boards of guardians.

"Sir James: Now what am I to tell the House about this business? It will never do to produce

Mr. Parker's Report and these depositions. I will tell you what I will say. I will begin by adverting to bone-crushing in workhouses; then go on to say that I lost no time in communicating with the Commissioners, who forthwith replied that no information of the practices mentioned by Mr. Wakley had reached them; that Mr. Parker had been directed to make inquiries on the spot; that I had had an interview with Mr. Parker, who verbally reported to me the result of his investigation; that some of the inmates of the workhouse of depraved appetite had eaten meat off the bones; that when the guardians heard of it they directed an investigation by their medical man; that the other workhouse officers had been enjoined to be careful to prevent inmates of depraved appetites gaining access to the bone store. If I say that the Assistant Commissioner made this communication orally, that will possibly suffice. This Report must not be produced. It must be treated as if it had never been made."

After the interview which Mr. Parker had with Sir James Graham, he, on his way from the Home-office, met Mr. Nicholls, who expressed to Mr. Parker his disapprobation of the course taken, and said that the Report ought to be suppressed. After all this, the House could not feel otherwise than dissatisfied that a Motion for inquiry should be met with a proposition for producing Papers. The House saw that the proceedings which took place had produced no practical result; yet the presumption was that the charges preferred had not been groundless, and that unquestionably there had been abuses in the management of the workhouse; and he must say that the right hon. Baronet should not go so far as he had done in urging charges against the master of the workhouse; and, until the charges were proved, the House should hold that person to be innocent. To him it appeared that circumstances had transpired in the course of the present proceedings which rendered the case of the master of the workhouse one of peculiar hardship; and that alone would form, in his opinion, a sufficient ground for the appointment of a Committee. The master said, that if time had been allowed him, he could have produced a sufficient defence. He had been promised time for the preparation of his defence; but that promise was eventually unfulfilled, and then he was driven to the necessity of resigning or of proceeding to his defence without sufficient preparation. His counsel advised him to adopt the former course, and thereby throw upon the Poor Law Commisioners a denial of justice. There were two incidents connected with these transactions which appeared to him perfectly inexplicable, except upon the hypothesis that the Poor Law Commissioners had been thoroughly scared by the exposure which took place of the affairs of the Andover workhouse, and that they had resolved to get over the difficulties which those occurrences occasioned, no matter at what sacrifice. Then, let it not be forgotten that at the moment when public prejudice was at its height, the master of the workhouse was in effect prohibited from entering upon his defence. The Poor Law Commissioners sent down an order on the 18th of September, in the following words, requiring the master of the workhouse to proceed with his defence:—

"Sir—I am directed by the Poor Law Commissioners to state that they have this day had an interview with their Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Parker. The Commissioners are informed by him that at your request, and with the consent of Mr. Westlake's counsel, Mr. Parker has adjourned the inquiry into your conduct until Tuesday next, when you would proceed with your defence to the charges preferred against you. The Commissioners are of opinion, that an officer against whom charges of the kind involved in the investigation now pending in the Andover Union have been made on oath, is liable to be called on to give an explanation, and enter upon his defence, with the least possible delay. The time that has elapsed since the investigation began, has been amply sufficient, in the opinion of the Commissioners, to enable you to get together the materials necessary for your defence, more especially as most of the charges relate to facts to be proved or disproved by witnesses on the spot. Had the board of guardians acceded to the recommendation of the Commissioners, and suspended you (a proceeding which would neither have assumed your guilt, nor have prejudiced any of your rights) the Commissioners might have taken a different view of the course they now think fit to adopt. As it is, the Commissioners have requested Mr. Parker to return to Andover forthwith; and they must call upon you to proceed with your defence either to-morrow or Saturday, and continue with it from day to day. An inquiry by an Assistant Commissioner is not a court constituted in such a manner that an adjournment to a future day can vitiate proceedings taken in the interval; and the Commissioners, in thus exercising the discretion necessarily reserved to their board, feel confident that they are not inflicting upon you any substantial injustice."

Two cases had been selected, and charges upon them brought against M'Dougal; one related to embezzlement, the other to taking liberties with some of the female paupers; and on each of these charges one case was to be chosen for investigation. He wished to know upon what principle that course had been taken; for if he were acquitted upon one, that acquittal would not prove his innocence of any other. Then Mr. Parker was sent down with directions to proceed immediately with the

inquiry. He asked for time; but, in conformity with the directions which he received on the 15th, he arrived in Andover on the 17th. He ventured, upon his own responsibility, to grant a delay of five days; he then returned to London, when he found that the Commissioners disapproved of that delay. It was quite true that the Commissioners, in the letter which he had read, stated that an officer was liable to be called on to explain his conduct with the least possible delay; that, he presumed, meant the least possible delay consistent with justice; but in this case the counsel and the solicitor of the master were in attendance every day, taking down the evidence against their client, and had no time during the intervals of the inquiry to prepare his defence. The facts were not capable of proof on the spot, for many parties required by the master were resident at distant places. Mr. Parker said—

"On the 17th, I attended at the workhouse, and the examination of such witnesses as could be got together upon the short notice that had been given was proceeded with. The master's counsel then stated, that it was impossible for him to proceed with the defence of his client unless an adjournment was granted; for the witnesses had not been examined, nor the brief prepared, inasmuch as the master's solicitor had not expected the investigation to be resumed; and, moreover, the witnessses were widely dispersed, some living in London, others at Salisbury, Winchester, Romsey, and Stockbridge. The counsel who appeared to support the charges acknowledged that he could not resist the application, and said he thought a few days' adjournment ought to suffice. The master's counsel asked for ten days, but the master's solicitor ultimately promised to be prepared in five. This adjournment for five days was acceded to by all parties; and, considering the indefinite character and nature of some of the charges, it must be acknowledged that an adjournment for five days was not of greater duration than the master might fairly demand. The reasonableness of the adjournment will be apparent, when it is understood that the evidenee on the following charge alone—'That he has frequently taken liberties with the younger women and girls in the house, and attempted at various times to prevail upon them to consent to gratify his wishes'—applied to the cases of no fewer than eleven women, and that none of the alleged assaults were of recent occurrence, and the greater number of them were said to have been committed several years since."

Something had been said about Mr. Parker's conduct on the inquiry, and he had heard with great surprise and regret the observation of the right hon. Gentleman: he could only say, that this was the first time he had heard any complaint made by the Poor Law Commissioners, or by any one speaking for them, of the mode in which Mr. Parker conducted the inquiry. Mr. Parker was dismissed; but the Poor Law Commissioners did not state that to be the reason; and it was unfair in the right hon. Gentleman, when he refused all inquiry, so to state. It was, however, an additional reason for granting the inquiry. Mr. Parker invited inquiry, and the Poor Law Commissioners did not do the same. The public could only draw one inference from the resistance to this inquiry—that the Poor Law Commissioners were afraid of its results. Mr. Parker made an inquiry, and on the supposition that the master's resignation might be immediately accepted, Mr. Parker recommended Mr. Price to take the place. He could only say, that before Mr. Parker returned to Andover, he told Sir E. Head of the application made by Mr. Price, who was then living at Southampton, expressing a desire, if Mr. M'Dougal's resignation should be accepted, to take the place temporarily; he told Sir E. Head, if he could prevail upon the board of guardians to accept the resignation, he should recommend Mr. Price, and Sir E. Head approved of the suggestion: if, therefore, Mr. Parker were to blame, as the Poor Law Commissioners afterwards thought, or rather as it was inferred by the right hon. Baronet that he was, Sir E. Head, one of the Poor Law Commissioners, must bear a share of the blame. Mr. Parker had known Price some years back, as master of the workhouse at Oxford, and highly approved of his conduct as he there saw it. Nay, more, he had received a letter from the chairman of the board of guardians at Oxford, speaking in high terms of Mr. Price's conduct there, and urging Mr. Parker to get some better situation for him. Mr. Parker had met Mr. Price again last year, at the Highworth and Swindon Union, where he was a candidate, and where he had a testimonial from the noble Lord the Member for Berkshire (Lord Barrington), and from various parties in Oxford. Finding, then, that Price was a candidate for employment, and as he failed at Swindon so late as May last, Mr. Parker recommended him as a candidate for the charge of a training school about to be founded on board ship; and the Poor Law Commissioners entertained the application, and saw Price. Mr. Parker, therefore, was not surprised at receiving a letter from him offering himself to supply M'Dougal's place; and he made the recommendation with the approval of Sir E. Head. It appeared that after Mr. Parker left Oxford, some

complaints were made of Price, and that Mr. Austin investigated the case; but before the end of that investigation Price resigned, and Mr. Austin had felt it his duty to withhold all information from the Commissioners till Price, on the recommendation of Mr. Parker, had been appointed to the situation at Andover, and *The Times* had commented upon his resignation of his former situation: till those remarks, Mr. Parker had never heard, and the Commissioners had never heard, of Price's resignation; and yet Sir E. Head told Mr. Parker that the appointment was a great indiscretion, and the Poor Law Commissioners must notice it in a marked manner. He had the honour of being acquainted with Mr. Lewis and Sir E. Head, and he entertained different opinions from the hon. Member for Andover and the Gentlemen who would support him, since he warmly approved the principle on which they had conducted the administration of the law; but he thought Mr. Parker harshly and unjustly treated by them, and he thought it his duty to lay private feeling aside, and to bring his case before the House. Soon after the discovery had been made about Mr. Price, with the aid of *The Times* newspaper, the Poor Law Commissioners sent an official letter to the clerk of the Union, regretting Mr. Price's appointment, and recommending his removal. It was not necessary for Mr. Parker to write any letter, except for his personal satisfaction. However, Mr. Lewis felt it his duty to tell Mr. Parker that if he wrote any letter he was to show it to the Commissioners, and such must be an imputation on his candour and fair dealing. Mr. Parker resented, and showed by his manner he resented, that imputation; however, he showed the letter, which was altered to the following:—

"The annoyance that I experienced at Andover has been increased by observations on the character of Mr. Price, of whom I had reason to entertain a favourable opinion. I regret having mentioned his name, because I fear that his appointment to take charge of the workhouse temporarily will embarrass the board of guardians. Circumstances require me to state my knowledge of Mr. Price.

Two days after Mr. Parker received the following communication from Mr. Nicholls:—

"Poor Law Commission Office,
Somerset House, October 16, 1845.

"My dear Sir—Looking at the importance and peculiar nature of the functions delegated to an Assistant Commissioner, we have, after full consideration, come to the conclusion that we cannot consistently with our public duty retain you any longer in your present office. It is therefore incumbent on us to request that you will send your resignation to the Commissioners. We wish to assure you that we take this step with the utmost reluctance; and we willingly acknowledge the zealous and efficient services which you have on various occasions rendered to the Commission. I remain, my dear Sir, ever yours faithfully,

"H. W. Parker, Esq." "GEORGE NICHOLLS.

There was a peculiar hardship in Mr. Parker's case. Much odium had been brought on the Poor Law and the Commissioners, of which Mr. Parker bore a great part. No steps had been taken till that night to explain why he was dismissed; and the Commissioners had never complained of his conduct of the inquiry. Mr. Parker had presented a petition stating that he would bring such evidence as the nature of the case would admit, to show he was dismissed by the Commissioners to divert the odium from themselves. He did not adopt that view wholly; but Mr. Parker had a *primâ facie* case for such a statement; and it would be but justice to him as well as the Commissioners to grant the inquiry. The right hon. Baronet had moved an Amendment, which made it necessary for him to wait till that was disposed of; but if he had an opportunity, as he hoped he should have, as he looked upon the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment as a mere juggle, he would move the Amendment of which he had given notice. The right hon. Gentleman might say that the Commissioners had power of removing any Assistant Commissioner at their discretion; but was that power to be exercised without any responsibility? If so, he should think it his duty when the annual vote was before the House to resist it till this act of hardship should be inquired into and explained. It might be said also that Mr. Parker had stated conversations that occurred to him as a public servant, and in confidence; but he (Mr. Christie) thought there were limits to the confidence to be required of public servants; and that, if the Commissioners removed a public servant without reason, and contrary to justice, sheltering themselves from all responsibility, and refusing inquiry; and if the parties injured were prevented from using the information acquired in the public service necessary to make out their grievance and procure redress, such a doctrine would lead to great hardship. The right hon. Baronet wrote to Mr. Parker thus:—

"You tell me that I may make any observations which occur to me on this intended publication. I will make only one. It contains statements of

conversations, of documents, and of communications, which, though known to you as a public servant, were strictly of a confidential nature."

But he could not answer the observations of the right hon. Gentleman better than by giving to the House the words in which Mr. Parker replied. [Sir J. GRAHAM: Is that the whole of my letter?] No: but he would read the other parts of it:—

"I have received a private note from you, enclosing a letter addressed to me, which you intimate an intention of publishing. You tell me, &c. (as above). . . . Having called your attention to this fact, I leave it to you to decide whether with propriety and without a breach of confidence you can execute your intention of publishing this statement."

Mr. Parker's answer was this:—

"I need not to be reminded even from such high authority as your own, how cautious a public servant, even under the pressure of such injury as I have sustained, should be with reference to all matters of a confidential nature which have come before him. It was for this reason that I have abstained in my letter from recapitulating the conversation on the occasion of the interview which I had with you at the Home Office, and from adverting to the contents of private letters that I have received from the Poor Law Commissioners. With the exception of three documents, all those in my statement connected with the Poor Law Commissioners have been published in *The Times* newspaper; and these three documents which I have added are not of a nature to involve a breach of confidence in their publication. The most material one, that relating to the bone-crushing at Andover, has already been adverted to by the Commissioners themselves, in a letter to the clerk of the Andover Union, dated the 17th of October, and transmitted by them to the newspapers for publication. I venture to express an opinion that where there is no real breach of official confidence, a public servant, who has in his possession documents that have been already in great part published, is entitled to put together the whole case, as the only means of counteracting misrepresentations, which those who have acted unjustly of necessity resort to, in the security of a partial view of the case. I should be sorry to find that your opinion as to the duties of a public servant, under such circumstances, should differ from my own. Whilst, on the one hand, there are limits to the employment of official materials, which the feelings of a gentleman cannot mistake: on the other hand, the fear that any public statement of official transactions may be stigmatized as a breach of confidence, however it may be guarded, would be a concession to the spirit which has lately rendered every office insecure, and every zealous discharge of duties unsafe in the department where I had the honour to be employed for nearly ten years."

He, therefore, left Mr. Parker's case in the hands of the right hon. Baronet and the House, hoping that, in justice to the Poor Law Commissioners, no less than to Mr. Parker, the right hon. Baronet would grant the inquiry he had asked for. But, if the right hon. Baronet still refused, he then appealed to the House, and told hon. Gentlemen that this was not the case of Mr. Parker only, but that of every public servant; and that such treatment of a long-tried, faithful, and zealous public officer was against the best and important interests of the country.

SIR J. GRAHAM: Although not quite regular, I beg to say a few words with respect to that part of the speech of the hon. Member for Weymouth which more particularly relates personally to myself—I allude to that part of his statement with reference to Mr. Parker. It is not my intention to transgress the rules of the House from the circumstances in which I have been placed, or to make an attack upon Mr. Parker in his absence. Suffice it for me to say, that I shall confine myself to that part of the case in which the hon. and learned Member made use of a harsh term with respect to myself, in reference to the statement made by me in this House in answer to a question put to me by the hon. Member for Finsbury. I answered that question upon the last day of the last Session; and, if I mistake not, my conversation with Mr. Parker was either the day or two days before the last of the Session. It is quite true that I had received a written Report made by Mr. Parker, which I have now moved for; but I do not hesitate to tell the hon. and learned Member that I do not think it was for the public good that I should have produced that document at that time. The hon. and learned Gentleman has produced to-night, a minute purporting to have been taken at the time of a conversation held by me officially with a public servant, and says that in his opinion Mr. Parker has not transgressed the bounds of duty in introducing to-night, through his hands, a memorandum of a conversation held by the Secretary of State with an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in his capacity of a public servant. It is for the House and the public to determine between the hon. Gentleman and me, whether any such breach of propriety has been committed. Now, I hold it to be admitted that I am quite incapable of misrepresenting any conversation held by me; and I am sure it will be very bad for those who have to discharge public duties in this country, when Gentlemen cannot meet upon that ground; but for any one to take a minute of any such conversation, and above all, having taken such minute, without any

previous intimation to produce that document to the House of Commons, and at the same time to intimate that there was another Gentleman present, and yet not to give the party accused the opportunity of conferring with that third party, does appear to me most extraordinary. Fortunately, it does so happen, on the showing of the hon. Member, that Sir E. Head was present. I, of course, have a very imperfect recollection of that conversation; but Sir E. Head will probably have a more distinct recollection of it, and, before long, I shall have an opportunity of communicating with him, and seeing whether his recollection corresponds with mine; but this I say, that in the pamphlet of Mr. Parker, from which the hon. Member quoted so largely, there are reports of confidential conversations held with other official gentlemen, the accuracy of which is distinctly denied by those gentlemen. So much is sufficient at the present moment with reference to that conversation. I must now go on to remark upon the Motion made by the hon. Gentleman, that the power exercised by the Poor Law Commissioners of dismissing Mr. Parker, should be referred for inquiry to a Committee of this House. I beg the House to consider what is the position of a Poor Law Commissioner with relation to his employers. Parliament has given exclusively to that Commission, independent of the Crown, the sole power of appointing their assistants; and what is the reason of such derogation? The Commissioners are responsible for every act of their assistants. Their assistants are their agents. The acts of the assistants are the acts of the Commissioners; and upon that ground that patronage is exclusively vested in the Commissioners. If such be the responsibility of the Commissioners, I ask the House to consider whether it be possible for them to transact with anything like order or safety any part of the important duties confided to them, if they should not have the power of a summary dismissal of agents so appointed? It would be impossible: it would be a complete destruction of the whole power and authority of the Commissioners to ask that the power of dismissal should be taken from them. They have the power of appointing—they have the power of dismissing; and I will tell the hon. Gentleman that it was not on account of the mode in which the inquiry at Andover was conducted; it was not on account of the recommendation of a substitute for Mr. M'Dougal as governor of the workhouse at Andover; it was not for one specific act upon which reliance has been placed, but generally the reason is this—Mr. Parker was a subordinate officer. He had evinced a spirit of insubordination to his employers, which in my opinion fully justified the course taken by the Poor Law Commissioners. They were responsible originally for the conduct of Mr. Parker: they were dissatisfied with his conduct generally, and they dismissed him. If an appeal were made to me in this House upon any private ground, I would tell the House frankly, that I am quite satisfied it would be impossible for that Commission safely or perfectly to perform their duties without being able to exercise such a power. In this case a memorandum was taken at the time of an official conversation, the accuracy of which I am not in a position to deny, because I have really a very imperfect recollection of what took place upon that occasion; but I think, upon reflection, Mr. Parker himself will regret the production of that particular document.

MR. FERRAND most sincerely rejoiced that this quarrel had taken place between the Poor Law Commissioners and Mr. Parker, and that he had written a pamphlet informing them of all the circumstances that had occurred. All he (Mr. Ferrand) wished was, that Mr. Mott had followed his example, and he had no doubt they would have learned from that exposure how it was the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham) became possessed of that written document which he drew from his red box. He agreed with the right hon. Baronet in stating that he had been rather ill used that night by the hon. Member for Weymouth (Mr. Christie), who in common justice ought to have given him notice that he intended to use the memorandum to which he called attention. But if he (Mr. Ferrand) were not very much mistaken, when that foul conspiracy was entered into to crush him (Mr. Ferrand), the right hon. Baronet declared in that House that he never had any communication with the Poor Law Commissioners or their assistants. However, it appeared that he held a communication with them at Somerset-house, and that a speech was concocted, which was delivered in the House. He (Mr. Ferrand) thought the day had arrived when the right hon. Baronet, in common justice, ought to inform the House how it was that that written document came into his hands, and from whom he had received it; for, from the hour when he used it

against him (Mr. Ferrand), to the present moment, not only he (Mr. Ferrand), but that House, as well as the country, were not informed as to the manner in which he got it. The right hon. Baronet had said that evening, that this was a workhouse squabble; but he (Mr. Ferrand) must congratulate the people of this country, that it had resulted in bone-crushing being stopped in no less than one hundred Unions. But did not the right hon. Baronet, in the year 1843, on the 15th March, pledge his word to the House, that this system of mills in the different workhouses should be abolished. He (Mr. Ferrand) remembered well the treatment he had received at his hands, as well as at the hands of the Poor Law Commissioners, when he exposed an attempt that was made to erect a rag mill in the Halifax Union. The right hon. Baronet wanted the House not to place any faith in his (Mr. Ferrand's) statement; but he was at last compelled to admit that a rag mill was to be erected in that Union workhouse. The right hon. Baronet thus addressed him on the occasion to which he had alluded. He said—

"That in consequence of what had taken place on the subject of rag mills, he had expressed a strong opinion against their use to the Commissioners, who had communicated that opinion to all the Unions, and that such mills should not be used again."

That was the promise which the right hon. Baronet gave nearly three years ago to that House and to the country; and how had that pledge been kept? They had listened to a most digraceful exposure that night, of a system which had not only created alarm and dismay through the country, but had excited feelings of horror in the minds of foreigners. He (Mr. Ferrand) had been travelling on the Continent, and he could assure the House that the strongest feelings of horror were expressed by foreigners at the idea, that under a Christian Government, and under the sanction of Poor Law Commissioners, such cruelties could be inflicted upon the unoffending poor of the Andover Union. Not only had those cruelties been inflicted upon them, but what proof had the House that the same system of cruelty was not inflicted in the one hundred Union workhouses to which the right hon. Baronet had alluded? Had not Mr. Parker informed them and the country, that the Poor Law Commissioners directed him to bring this inquiry to a speedy conclusion, to allay the public mind, before one-half the evidence was taken? He (Mr. Ferrand) felt that, for the purpose of having those cruelties exposed to the public gaze, it was the bounden duty of that House to insist that a Committee should be appointed. They should not lend themselves to the right hon. Baronet, who was going to crush inquiry, for he dreaded the exposure that would take place. He (Mr. Ferrand) gave notice that afternoon of his intention to move the addition of a few words to the hon. Member's Motion, that the inquiry might extend into his own neighbourhood. The House could not have forgotten the treatment which he (Mr. Ferrand) had received at the hands of the Poor Law Commissioners in the year 1842, when that secret Report was drawn from the red box, and used by the right hon. Baronet with such stage effect against him (Mr. Ferrand). The right hon. Baronet, on that occasion, said that he knew nothing against the character and respectability of Mr. Mott, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner. It was on the 20th of June, 1842, that the right hon. Baronet made that statement. But what would the House say, when he informed them that Mr. Mott, having been employed by the right hon. Baronet as a special Government Commissioner to inquire into the truth of the statements made by the then hon. Member for Bolton, in August, 1841, was—instead of doing his duty, as he was bound to do, to the House and to the country—charged by respectable parties residing in Bolton to have been guilty of partial conduct—of falsely accusing hon. Gentlemen—of dealing in slanderous imputations—of making false and calumnious charges. Those were the charges that were brought against Mr. Mott, by a gentleman who was formerly a Member of that House; and those charges were made and proved against him by authenticated documents in the possession of the right hon. Gentleman at the very time he was employed as a Poor Law Commissioner at Keighley Union, and at the very time when he drew up the false Report that was used against him (Mr. Ferrand) by the right hon. Baronet in that House. At the very time that he was so employed, he was branded by honourable men in the borough of Bolton as having been guilty of the conduct which he (Mr. Ferrand) had first narrated to the House. With this Report respecting the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Mott, in the possession of the right hon. Baronet, he was employed—and he (Mr. Ferrand) used the word advisedly—he was employed for the

purpose of drawing up a false Report against him, that that Report might be used in that House for the purpose of crushing him (Mr. Ferrand) as a Member of the British House of Commons. It was on the 30th of April that Mr. Mott appeared in the board-room of the Keighley Union; on the 17th of June, 1842, the right hon. Baronet drew from his red box the Report drawn up in April, 1842, by this Mr. Mott. On the authority of that Report, he charged him (Mr. Ferrand) with jobbing, and sanctioning such proceedings in his capacity as a magistrate. He (Mr. Ferrand) was not going to detain the House by ripping up the whole of the proceedings that occurred at that time: it was sufficient for him to justify himself now before the House and the country. He (Mr. Ferrand) would not have alluded to the subject, had not the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck) made use of language the other night, for the purpose of injuring him (Mr. Ferrand), by alluding to the Resolution of that House respecting him, which Resolution he (Mr. Ferrand) never condescended even to look at. He treated that Resolution in the manner it deserved at the hands of an honest man. But the hon. Member for Bath was cheered by the First Lord of the Treasury; and he (Mr. Ferrand) having been, in common justice to himself, compelled to allude to the subject again, would vindicate himself in the sight of that House and of the country. On the 20th of June, three days after the right hon. Baronet had produced this secret document, he (Mr. Ferrand) stated that the right hon. Baronet had, on the 17th June, referred to a Report made by Assistant Commissioner Mott, who was sent down to the North of England expressly for the purpose of getting up a case against the Keighley Union, and that that paid officer had produced a Report containing charges for the purpose of misleading the House of Commons. And what said the right hon. Baronet? He said, that, in addition to the Report of Mr. Mott, of the 23d of April, he had the Report of Sir John Walsham, of the 1st of June, that the Union of Keighley was in immediate contact with the Union of Bingley; and Sir John Walsham having been sent down on a Special Commission to inquire into the state of things there, was also directed to go to Keighley, and see if what Mr. Mott had stated was borne out by facts. He (Mr. Ferrand) wanted the House to remark that the right hon. Baronet had, on the 17th of June, quoted Mr. Mott's Report, and also Sir John Walsham's Report dated on the 1st of June. The hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Duncombe) would mark that. He (Mr. Ferrand) subsequently asked the right hon. Baronet if Sir John Walsham had not been sent down to Keighley Union previous to the debate in that House; and he said that Sir John Walsham being in the neighbourhood, he (Sir James Graham) suggested to the Poor Law Commissioners, to remove all doubt on the subject, that Sir John Walsham should be sent there. He (Mr. Ferrand) now asked the right hon. Baronet how it was that he suggested that Sir John Walsham should be sent to Keighley Union to back up Mr. Mott's false Report against him (Mr. Ferrand)—a Report which he had proved to be false by nine respectable witnesses out of that Union? Magistrates, guardians, and professional men had proved, one and all, that his Report was in every respect unfounded. After these statements had taken place between the right hon. Baronet and himself, a Committee was appointed in that House to inquire into the truth of this Report. It was a packed Committee. He (Mr. Ferrand) had said before, in that House, and he now repeated it, that the Report was in direct opposition to the evidence that was laid before them. He (Mr. Ferrand), knowing that the Report of the Committee was not a fair or a just one, came down to the House, a few days after the Report was laid on the Table, and he moved for certain Papers to prove to the House, and to the country, that that Committee had reported contrary to the evidence. The right hon. Baronet opposed the Motion, resisting the production of the Papers, because he knew that when the Papers were produced, they would prove that Mr. Mott had drawn up a false Report, which Report was used against him (Mr. Ferrand); and the right hon. Baronet thought to induce a majority of the Members of the House to support him. But what was the conduct of the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell)? He had acted a noble and manly part, as he always did. He said he did not know what the right hon. Baronet meant by refusing the Papers. The right hon. Baronet having then counted noses in the House, saw he would be defeated, and therefore had granted the Papers. On the the 2d of August last, immediately before Parliament was prorogued, the Poor Law Commissioners placed the Papers on the

Table of the House. Now, the first charge of Mr. Mott against the guardians of the Keighley Union was that they had acted in direct opposition to the directions of the Poor Law Commissioners. But the Poor Law Commissioners themselves admitted they had no written evidence to show in what respect the Keightley guardians had acted in opposition to the Central Board at Somerset-house. The whole of that man's Report, with scarcely a single exception, was false. But how did the Poor Law Commissioners treat Mr. Mott? Before the Parliament again assembled, the Poor Law Commissioners dismissed him, and for some time he was nowhere to be heard of. It was impossible for him (Mr. Ferrand) to bring him to the bar of the House for having maliciously—and he (Mr. Ferrand) used the word advisedly—drawn up a false Report for the purpose of enabling the right hon. Baronet to crush him (Mr. Ferrand). But what employment was Mr. Mott engaged in when they next heard of him? Why he was writing a Poor Law Commissioners' Paper, under the patronage of the Poor Law Commissioners, and of the Longtown Union, of which he believed the right hon. Baronet was the Chairman. That was the way Mr. Mott was patronized by the Poor Law Commissioners and the Longtown Union, after he was dismissed from his office to prevent him (Mr. Ferrand) from bringing him to the bar of that House. The right hon. Baronet at that time did not deny that Mr. Mott was dismissed for drawing up a false Report against him. When he (Mr. Ferrand) appeared at the Leeds meeting, he said that the right hon. Baronet had taken steps to procure a Report that was false. He had proved that he communicated with the Poor Law Commissioners, and suggested to them that Sir John Walsham should be sent down to Keightley, for the purpose of obtaining evidence as to whether Mr. Mott's Report was true or not. He (Mr. Ferrand) had proved to the House that night, that he dated his Report on the 1st of June, and that the right hon. Baronet did not use Mr. Mott's Report until the 17th of June; therefore, he (Mr. Ferrand) called upon the right hon. Baronet to inform the House how it was he became possessed of those two Reports; and until he did so, he (Mr. Ferrand) should, as he had said before, treat the Resolution of the House with the contempt it deserved.

THE SPEAKER called the hon. Gentleman to order.

MR. FERRAND begged pardon for having made use of an expression that he ought not to use. He knew what his opinion should be of the right hon. Baronet and that Resolution. He could say, "*Mens sibi conscia recti.*" He was conscious of the integrity of his own conduct through the whole of these proceedings; and he thanked God that he had not lost the friendship of any man, or fallen in the estimation of the people of the country. If the right hon. Baronet could prove to the House that he was not connected with getting up this Report against him, he then would retract any expression he had used against him in that House or elsewhere. But until he did so, not one word would he (Mr. Ferrand) retract that he had ever uttered. What was his (Mr. Ferrand's) conduct after the Resolution of the House was passed? He instantly addressed a letter to the right hon. Baronet, proving every statement that he had made. He circulated that letter amongst the Members of the House, and sent the right hon. Baronet a copy of it. He received that letter, but from that day to this he had never answered it. What was the tone of public opinion on that letter? The press laid politics aside, and (with only a single exception) through Great Britain and Ireland had maintained that he (Mr. Ferrand) had proved his case against the right hon. Baronet. The single exception was a newspaper in London; and he (Mr. Ferrand) had reason to think that the article in that paper, denying that he had justified himself, was written by an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner. He would now allude to what had taken place when the First Lord of the Treasury quoted the Report of Sir John Walsham, with the view of showing that he (Mr. Ferrand) was cognizant of all the alleged misdoings in the Union of Keighley. The observations he alluded to were made by the right hon. Baronet on the 24th of June, 1843. [The hon. Member then proceeded to read a long extract from the speech in question.] This was the language of the First Lord of the Treasury, and was used by him with the view of holding him (Mr. Ferrand) up to ridicule. In his anxiety to heap abuse on him and disgrace on the inhabitants of the Union, the right hon. Baronet read other extracts from the Report of Sir John Walsham, describing the state of the Bingley poor-house, which, however, he would not weary the House with reading. The right hon. Baronet then ob-

served, that when this state of things was known, there was ample time for him to send for an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner to put things to rights. Now what would the right hon. Baronet say when he (Mr. Ferrand) informed the House, that since the period when Mr. Mott was dismissed, at the end of 1842, up to the present time, not a single Assistant Poor Law Commissioner had crossed the threshold of the Bingley poor-house, and that the same state of things existed there as was described in the Report, and that the inmates of it were still sleeping six in a bed? This, be it remembered, was under the government of the Poor Law Commissioners. This was the conduct of men backed up by the right hon. Baronet, and whose proceedings he screened, by refusing to grant a Committee. He trusted such exposures of the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners and their Assistant Commissioners would convince the House and the country that it was time that the whole office should be abolished. If the First Lord of the Treasury were present he would appeal to him, as Prime Minister—for he had quoted a false Report, got up by the Commissioners, and that for the purpose of holding him (Mr. Ferrand) up to ridicule—whether he would any longer be a participator and supporter of this disgraceful system? The guilty parties in all those proceedings were the Poor Law Commissioners, backed by the right hon. Secretary for the Home Department. He trusted what had taken place to-night would lead to inquiry; and if that was done he should not fear the result. Right glad should he be if the Committee was appointed, as it would prove the commencement of the end of the new Poor Law; and he trusted that before the end of the Session he should see the death of the Poor Law Commission as well as the dissolution of the Ministry.

Captain PECHELL said, that if the Committee was appointed, he quite agreed with the hon. Member that an inquiry should also take place into the proceedings of the Keighley Union. If the information which he had received was correct, there was something wrong in Somerset-house; and the movement of the straw indicated that there would be some further resignations in that quarter. He knew that Mr. Parker was a most excellent officer of the Poor Law Commissioners; and he thought it only an act of justice to say so. The Commissioners had sent him down to his neighbourhood to institute an inquiry, and they compelled him to make a Report, which he (Captain Pechell) believed he was now sorry for having drawn up. It was not only clear from Mr. Parker's pamphlet and petition, but also from what was stated in the public prints, that the public never would be satisfied until an inquiry was instituted by a Committee of that House, into the Andover Union, Mr. Parker's case, and the Keighley Union. The right hon. Baronet asked for a postponement of the subject until the Papers which he proposed to lay on the Table were printed. Why had not those Papers been already presented to the House, so that they might at once have gone into the case? The right hon. Baronet had that night given them some hopes that he was determined to make himself the master-mind of the Board at Somerset-house. It was clear that the right hon. Baronet had been deceived by the Commissioners, for he had declared last year that a stop should be put to bone-grinding in Union workhouses, where it was clear that in many Unions this disgusting kind of work was carried on to the profit of the Poor Law guardians. In 1842 and 1843, he (Captain Pechell) had brought the subject forward; but the right hon. Baronet did not encourage him to expect the system would be put an end to. In 1844 the right hon. Baronet expressed an opinion against the practice; and in 1845 he said that it was a disgraceful system, and must be put an end to. It was on the same day that he said this that the hon. Member for Finsbury brought forward the case of the Andover Union; and he believed that such a case never would have arisen if the right hon. Baronet had issued the order in 1842 which he did in January, 1846. Anxious as he was for inquiry, he feared that many of the parties who now employed the poor in bone-crushing, would defeat the intentions—not of the Poor Law Commissioners, for they did not appear sincere or zealous in the matter—but of the right hon. Baronet, who had declared that an end should be put to the system. It appeared from a Paper laid on the Table yesterday, that there were thirty-four Poor Law Unions in which the practice still existed; and of these thirteen had been pardoned and been allowed, up to the 1st of April, to employ their respective paupers in this way, so that their stocks of bones might be used up. It was clear from the return on the Paper issued yesterday, that some of the boards of guardians in these thirty-four Unions intended to re-

sist the wishes of the right hon. Baronet on this subject. He would only add, in conclusion, that he trusted that the hon. Member for Andover would be successful in the result of the inquiry before the Committee.

SIR R. H. INGLIS wished to make a few observations on the apparent hardship of the case of Mr. Parker. He did not defend the indiscretion of that gentleman in recommending a person to the board of guardians at Andover to be master of the workhouse whose conduct was not sufficiently known to him. But admitting this and other indiscretions, he could not help feeling that Mr. Parker had been punished more severely than he ought to have been. He had not the honour of Mr. Parker's acquaintance; he did not even know him by sight; but he had read the pamphlet and petition of that gentleman, and from them he learnt that Mr. Parker was induced to abandon an honourable profession, in which he had a fair chance of rising, to accept the office in question, and that for a mere act of indiscretion it appeared that all his prospects in life were likely to be blighted. He might be told that Her Majesty's Government neither appointed nor removed Mr. Parker, but that it was the Act of the Poor Law Commissioners. He had never either in or out of the House said one word against the Poor Law Commissioners, as he believed that they wished to exercise a sound discretion in the discharge of the duties intrusted to them; but still they were men, and liable to err, and he did not believe that the Poor Law Commissioners were any more infallible than Her Majesty's Ministers. He hoped that it was not yet too late to replace Mr. Parker. Without entering into the merits of the case of the Andover Union, much less following the hon. Members who had brought them into Yorkshire and Sussex, he would confine himself to that point alone, and would respectfully submit that the claims of Mr. Parker ought not to be lost sight of or passed over.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM said, he could have wished that the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford had recollected what he (Sir James Graham) had stated when he had last addressed the House. He had been asked by many hon. Members whether the Poor Law Commissioners complained of anything except indiscretion on the part of Mr. Parker; and he had already stated to the House in the name of the Poor Law Commissioners, that they complained not only of indiscretion on the part of that gentleman, but also of a spirit of insubordination in his conduct which was offensive to them.

MR. T. S. DUNCOMBE said, he would ask the right hon. Baronet whether he thought, after what he had just stated, either the House, or his hon. Friend the Member for Andover, or the public, would be satisfied unless an inquiry were instituted. The right hon. Baronet proposed now to lay on the Table certain Returns connected with the administration of the Andover Union workhouse, together with copies of Mr. Parker's Report, and of the evidence taken by him, and also copies of the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. M'Dougal, as communicated by the Poor Law Commissioners; but would the right hon. Baronet recollect that the notice of his hon. Friend the Member for Andover had been on the books for the last six weeks? and, however satisfactory it might have been for the right hon. Baronet to have offered the production of these Papers when the subject was first mentioned, it was clear that the public would not be now satisfied unless the inquiry were instituted. A notice of Motion had also been given by his hon. Friend the Member for Weymouth (Mr. Christie), with regard to the treatment of Mr. Parker. It appeared that Mr. Parker considered himself an ill-used man. He (Mr. Duncombe) had read the pamphlet published by that gentleman; and in his opinion Mr. Parker had made out a very good case. The right hon. Baronet said that when the House read the Papers which he offered to produce, they would be satisfied that the Poor Law Commissioners were unimpeachable in their conduct in this matter—that they would be found to be above all suspicion. Now, that was what the House wanted to find out by this inquiry. They wanted to know the facts of the case; and how was that to be done, except by instituting the inquiry? When the question had been first mooted by his hon. Colleague the Member for Finsbury, Mr. Parker was appointed to go down and inquire into the allegation of the petitioners. Nothing could be fairer than the conduct of the Government in this particular; but somehow or other the investigation then entered upon had terminated most abruptly. Mr. Parker seemed to him to be the most unfortunate man that ever existed; for he would appear to have given no satisfaction to any party. In his (Mr. Duncombe's) opinion he had committed a great mistake in resigning his office, as he ought to have

thrown the onus of dismissing him on the Poor Law Commissioners. The Commissioners recommended him to resign, but that was no reason why he should do so. He had heard, over and over again, of Members of the Government, and of Members of Parliament, being called upon to resign, without their thinking it necessary to adopt the recommendation until obliged to do so. Mr. Parker was not, however, a Member of that House; and on being recommended to resign, though the House did not know exactly why, he did resign. They wanted to inquire why Mr. Parker had been required to resign his office; and whether that inquiry would terminate in his favour or not, it was not for him (Mr. Duncombe) to say. He thought the production of the Papers offered by the right hon. Baronet would not, and ought not to satisfy his hon. Friend. It would not satisfy the justice of the case—it would not satisfy the public—and it would not satisfy the parties immediately concerned. He would call upon the right hon. Baronet, therefore, if he would save much trouble and time in this matter, to agree at once to the Motion of his hon. Friend.

MR. BORTHWICK said, if the details which the hon. Member for Andover had presented to the House to-night had been told of some distant or savage land into which civilization had never entered, and where Christianity was unknown, they might have regarded the statement as surcharged, that the picture was over-coloured, but, at the same time, that it was not in human imagination to invent details so horrible. They would have assumed that some foundation must exist for such a representation, and the spirit of English benevolence would have been roused to meet the evil. Public meetings would have been held, subscriptions would have been loyally entered into, missionaries would have been sent forth to reclaim, if not within the pale of Christianity, at least within the pale of humanity, persons who were suffering such wretched privations. Would they then pause in the same good work, because the sufferers were their own fellow countrymen, and the remedy was in their own hands, and could be applied without trouble? The sufferers were Englishmen; the tyranny under which they suffered was a law enacted by that House. On the question of reporting a private conversation he did not wish to enter. Had he been in Mr. Parker's position, he would on no account have been induced to lend himself to the publication of a confidential conversation. He admitted this the more frankly, because he thought that now, when the matter was brought before the House, it afforded all the stronger argument for entering into a full, complete, and ample inquiry into all the circumstances connected with the question. The hon. and learned Gentleman forgot to mention one fact, viz., that a most important document had been suppressed upon the trial—suppressed by the guardians. The fact was made known to the Poor Law Commissioners, and by their connivance the entry in the book of the proceedings of the guardians was erased. It was shameful that persons holding such a position should enter into a conspiracy with the guardians for the purpose of displacing a medical officer.

MR. HUME said, the right hon. Baronet had, from his last statement, rendered it absolutely necessary that the inquiry should be made. The right hon. Baronet stated that Mr. Parker had been guilty of other acts of insubordination; but the House had a right to know what these acts of insubordination were. The Legislature had authorized the appointment of Assistant Commissioners, and had given the appointment of these officers to the Poor Law Commissioners. It appeared now that the Commissioners were to have the power also of dismissing them, and that too on a mere allegation of insubordination. It was most important that the Assistant Commissioners should know what their duty was, and when they would be guilty of insubordination. He could not conceive how the Commissioners could have dismissed any man who for ten years had merited their support and approbation, without sufficient cause; and he would ask the right hon. Baronet, would he sanction the dismissal of a public officer who stood so high for his services in the Commission, without some recorded minute of the grounds on which that dismissal had been resolved upon? The necessity of informing the Assistant Commissioners of their duties, was one reason why this inquiry should be granted; but another reason was, that the public demanded the inquiry. The inquiry had been commenced, and the public had a right to be informed whether Mr. Parker or the Commissioners were in the right. The Government might now refuse the inquiry, but the House of Commons would, he felt satisfied, grant it. He therefore trusted the right hon. Baronet would not persevere in attempting to screen the Commissioners from inquiry, more es-

pecially as it was probable that the point would turn out to be some trivial matter which ought not to have been allowed to proceed further.

VISCOUNT POLLINGTON said, he trusted that in justice to Mr. Parker this inquiry would be allowed to proceed.

MR. JERVIS said, feeling very deeply on this subject, affecting as it did a member of his profession, and believing that the general impression was that Mr. Parker had not been well treated by the Commissioners, he wished to offer a few remarks before the debate closed. He thought the matter had assumed a far more important character from what had fallen from the right hon. Baronet. Mr. Parker had been dismissed. [Sir JAMES GRAHAM: Had resigned.] Or rather had been induced to resign in consequence of being guilty of what were called acts of indiscretion. It was of the greatest importance that the Assistant Commissioners should have their duties defined, and should know what would be considered indiscretion and insubordination on their part. If the House expected that gentlemen of honour and of competency should discharge the duties of their office, it could not be supposed that they would act on all occasions on the mere dictates of men not more respectable or more honourable than themselves. If Mr. Parker had been indiscreet before this inquiry, why was he appointed to it? and if his indiscretion was only shown in the progress of that inquiry, what objection could there be to have the fact made known? Was it in allowing an adjournment of the cass on the application of the master, who, having serious charges brought against him, required time to prepare his defence? That surely was not indiscreet. He should confess that he did not know what was meant by the term "refractory." He was induced to think that there must have been some instructions from the Commissioners to Mr. Parker, which had not been made public, and which he, perhaps, felt himself unable to obey. The right hon. Baronet would forgive him for saying that the profession was no unimportant body in this matter; and neither it nor the public—a still more important body—would feel satisfied at the vague assertion of Mr. Parker having been refractory, without some inquiry being instituted into the matter. It would not be just towards the guardians, towards the Commissioners, towards the master or the medical officer, and it would not be just towards Mr. Parker, and still more towards the public, to refuse the inquiry; and he, therefore, trusted that the Motion would be acceded to.

GENERAL JOHNSON said, he could not understand on what ground the right hon. Baronet refused the inquiry. All the parties concerned prayed for an inquiry; and yet, without any reason assigned, inquiry was to be refused. True, the right hon. Baronet had not stated that he would refuse inquiry after the Papers had been produced; and if he would give his word that the inquiry would be granted after the Papers had been laid on the Table, the hon. Member for Andover would, perhaps, consent to withdraw his Motion. He was sure the country would, if this inquiry were not granted, think, and with reason, there was something exceedingly black to induce its refusal.

MR. AGLIONBY said, there had been few questions before the House upon which more general unanimity had been exhibited than upon this. The public thought there was some mystery in this case, and the expressions used by the right hon. Baronet to-night would not tend to dissipate that mystery. They would be inclined to think the Commissioners had made Mr. Parker a scapegoat for themselves. It was alleged that Mr. Parker had been requested to resign, not merely for indiscretion, but insubordination; and in those charges the public were deeply interested. The inquiry should be first into the allegations respecting the Andover Union; and the Motion of the hon. Member for Weymouth should be attached to it, so that the investigation might be made general.

MR. S. CRAWFORD urged the necessity of a full and complete inquiry. The people would feel there was no justice in the administration of the Poor Law if it were refused—that they were left to the mercy of guardians and Commissioners, with no court to appeal to for redress. Justice, humanity, and sound policy demanded this investigation; and if the Government wished the Poor Law to be sustained, they would not persist in refusing it.

MR. FIELDEN said, the debate appeared to him to have been carried on, as it were, in defence of the Commissioners. Inquiry ought to be made into the administration of the Poor Law in the Andover Union; but he asked for something more. He asked that a fair Committee should be appointed to carry on the inquiry, and not a one-sided one. Unless the right

hon. Baronet granted a fair Committee, he (Mr. Fielden) hoped there would be no inquiry at all. The public took more interest in this business of the Andover Union than the Poor Law Commissioners or the right hon. Baronet imagined. The facts developed concerning it were calculated to make them demand that an end should be put to the Commission. Inquiry was absolutely necessary; and the public would look to the decision of the House upon it with an interest quite as intense as that with which they regarded the Corn Law debate. Every man's vote was marked, and if the right hon. Baronet was disposed to do what was right towards the public, he would, without hesitation, grant the inquiry.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM: The hon. and learned Member for Cockermouth (Mr. Aglionby) only does me justice when he says that at all times I am not only willing but anxious to yield to any expression of the feelings and opinions of this House. I mean to do so upon this occasion, but ——[*Cheers.*] After that triumphant cheer, perhaps the House will allow me to finish what I was about to say. I think the House will remember, that when I followed the hon. Member for Andover (Mr. Etwall), I moved as an Amendment the production of Papers enumerated in the Motion now in your hands, Sir; and I stated then, what I repeat again, that I was not unwilling that a Committee of Inquiry should be instituted in connection with the Motion of the hon. Member for Andover, if, after the perusal of those Papers, which contained the whole information, the House should remain of opinion that a Committee of Inquiry should be granted. I think I see plainly that the opinion of both sides of the House is that it is expedient at once to institute that inquiry. I, therefore, with the permission of the House, am perfectly willing to withdraw the Amendment, and to consider the Motion as a substantive Motion, and to acquiesce in it. So much for that. I am afraid I shall not be met with cheers for what I am about to add. With regard to the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Weymouth (Mr. Christie), for the extension of the inquiry into the causes which led to the resignation of Mr. Parker—to that Motion I must offer a decided opposition. I have already stated, and I repeat it, that the power of appointment of Assistant Poor Law Commissioners is vested absolutely in the Commissioners; the responsibility of the selection rests with them exclusively; they are responsible for all the acts of their subordinates; and I repeat my deliberate opinion, that it is not possible for the Commissioners to discharge their duty efficiently and satisfactorily if they are to be interfered with in the selection or in the summary dismissal of their subordinate officers. Having stated that opinion, I cannot, consistently with my sense of duty, consent to the extension of the inquiry in the manner proposed by the hon. and learned Member for Weymouth.

MR. LAW said, the right hon. Baronet deprecated inquiry because the Poor Law Commissioners were invested with arbitrary powers. Now he (Mr. Law) required the House of Commons to inquire into the conduct of those Commissioners who were so invested with arbitrary powers.

COLONEL SIBTHORP supported inquiry, and taunted the Government for being yet wanting in its Members in that House. There was no Colonial Secretary, no Irish Secretary, no Attorney General for Ireland, no junior Lords of the Treasury yet. No constituency seemed willing to take them at any price. Every day, he believed, would show more and more the impudence, the treachery, and the hypocrisy of the Poor Law. He had tried to annihilate the Commissioners; he had tried to annihilate the Assistant Commissioners; and he had tried to annihilate the law itself. In this he might have failed, but he thought the present case was preliminary to that end.

Amendment withdrawn. Original Question again put.

MR. CHRISTIE said, he would move, as an Amendment, the addition of the following words to the Motion of the hon. Member for Andover:—

"And into the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners, and their late Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Parker, in reference to the two investigations held at Andover, and into all the circumstances under which the Poor Law Commissioners called upon Mr. Parker to resign his Assistant Commissionership."

If there had been a unanimity of feeling in that House in favour of the inquiry into the administration of the Poor Law, there had been the same unanimity in favour of inquiry into the case of Mr. Parker. The debate had turned upon the hardship inflicted upon Mr. Parker. He had listened with great attention to the opinions expressed by the hon. and learned Member for Chester (Mr. Jervis) upon the subject of Mr. Parker's case, and he had heard with equal regret the last observa-

tions of the hon. and learned Member. The hon. and learned Member for Chester must not imagine that the demand for inquiry would be abandoned, although the right hon. Baronet was not disposed to consent to it. He (Mr. Christie) repeated, that the question of the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners towards Mr. Parker was closely connected with the administration of the law in the Andover Union, and that the two questions ought, therefore, to be referred to the same Committee.

Mr. JERVIS begged to explain. Notwithstanding what had been said, it was his intention to vote against the Amendment; and he spoke to a certain extent the opinions of the profession, when he said they were satisfied that the conduct of Mr. Parker could be more properly investigated by a separate Committee, than it would if mixed up with the general inquiry. He (Mr. Jervis) was in some measure led to the conclusion, because he was afraid that this measure was to be carried from no conviction of the honesty or integrity of Mr. Parker's case, but from some other feeling in the breasts of the compact body. He was quite satisfied Mr. Parker's conduct would stand more fairly if investigated by a Committee to be appointed after the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Andover. It was far better to separate the two issues; and on this ground, whether right or wrong, he should vote against the Amendment of his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Christie).

Mr. MILES said, he had taken a considerable share in the passing of the Poor Law, but held, at the same time, that if any thing wrong took place under its administration, it would be the duty of Parliament to make searching inquiry; and unless searching inquiry were made into the case now before the House, see what a position the poor must be placed in. Great injustice had been done by somebody in the first instance to the poor resident in the Andover Union; and in the next place something mysterious had transpired between Mr. Parker and the Commissioners relative to that Union. Parliament ought to know the facts in both these cases. Mr. Parker had a right to have his conduct thoroughly sifted; and he (Mr. Miles) contended that the House could not enter upon the general inquiry relative to the Andover Union without taking Mr. Parker's case into consideration at the same time.

Dr. BOWRING should vote with the hon. and learned Member for Weymouth. The two subjects of inquiry were intimately connected, and it would be most convenient that both should be referred to the same Committee.

Mr. WAKLEY sincerely hoped the decision of the House would be unanimous. The feeling of the House universally was in favour of inquiry, not into a portion of the case only, but into the whole of it. If the Commissioners did possess that arbitrary and undefined power which the right hon. Baronet had described, in Heaven's name let the House know it. If not, let the inquiry be granted, not only for the sake of the Commissioners, but for the sake of the poor. The right hon. Gentleman had been found "squeezable" on former occasions: the pressure was still upon him; and he (Mr. Wakley) advised him to yield this point whilst he could with something like a good grace. He wished to say that his information had not been derived from Mr. Westlake, the medical officer of the Union. The guardians of the Union had endeavoured to eject that gentleman from his office; and, in his opinion, the right hon. Gentleman was bound to make inquiry into the conduct of that gentleman.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, that in all these cases there could be no doubt that the Poor Law Commissioners were responsible to the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham), and the right hon. Baronet was responsible to that House and the country.

The House divided on the Question, that the words proposed by Mr. Christie be added:—Ayes 92; Noes 69: Majority 23.

List of the Ayes.

Acton, Col.	Crawford, W. S.
Aglionby, H. A.	Deedes, W.
Aldam, W.	D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Allix, J. P.	Disraeli, B.
Arkwright, G.	Dodd, G.
Bankes, G.	Duncombe, T.
Barnard, E. G.	Etwall, R.
Benett, J.	Evans, W.
Bennet, P.	Fielden, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.	Ferrand, W. B.
Beresford, Major	Finch, G.
Berkeley, hon. C.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Bodkin, W. H.	Fuller, A. E.
Borthwick, P.	Gooch, E. S.
Bowring, Dr.	Halford, Sir H.
Browne, hon. W.	Hall, Sir B.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Halsey, T. P.
Busfeild, W.	Hanmer, Sir J.
Cayley, E. S.	Harris, hon. Capt.
Clayton, R. R.	Hawes, B.
Collett, J.	Henley, J. W.
Collins, W.	Hildyard, T. B. T.
Copeland, Ald.	Hinde, J. H.
Cowper, hon. W. F.	Hindley, C.

Hudson, G.	Rendlesham, Lord
Hume, J.	Repton, G. W. G.
Humphery, Ald.	Scott, hon. F.
Ingestre, Visct.	Seymer, H. K.
Inglis, Sir R. H.	Sibthorp, Col.
Johnson, Gen.	Somerville, Sir W. M.
Langston, J. H.	Spooner, R.
Law, hon. C. E.	Spry, Sir S. T.
Lawson, A.	Stansfield, W. R. C.
Manners, Lord J.	Staunton, Sir G. T.
Matheson, J.	Stuart, Lord J.
Miles, W.	Stuart, J.
Mitcalfe, H.	Tancred, H. W.
Neeld, J.	Taylor, J. A.
Newdegate, C. N.	Thompson, Ald.
Norreys, Sir D. J.	Troubridge, Sir E. T.
O'Brien, A. S.	Waddington, H. S.
Packe, C. W.	Walsh, Sir. J. B.
Palmer, R.	Williams, W.
Palmer, G.	Yorke, H. R.
Pechell, Capt.	
Plumridge, Capt.	TELLERS.
Pollington, Visct.	Wakley, T.
Rashleigh, W.	Christie, W. D.

List of the NOES.

Acland, T. D.	Howard, P. H.
Adderley, C. B.	James, W.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.	Jervis, J.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.	Jocelyn, Visct.
Bowles, A.	Johnstone, H.
Boyd, J.	Jones, Capt.
Brisco, M.	Kelly, Sir F.
Brotherton, J.	Lambton, H.
Bruce, Lord E.	Lockhart, A. E.
Bruges, W. H. L.	Lockhart, W.
Buller, C.	McGeachy, F. A.
Cardwell, E.	Mahon, Visct.
Carew, W. H. P.	Martin, C. W.
Childers, J. W.	Morpeth, Visct.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Morris, D.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.	Pakington, J. S.
Corry, rt. hon. H.	Patten, J. W.
Courtenay, Lord	Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Cripps, W.	Peel, J.
Davies, D. A. S.	Reid, Col.
Denison, E. B.	Russell, Lord J.
Dennistoun, J.	Smith, J. A.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Smythe, hon. G.
Escott, B.	Strutt, E.
Fitzroy, hon. H.	Sutton, hon. H. M.
Fitzroy, Lord C.	Thesiger, Sir F.
Flower, Sir J.	Thornely, T.
Forster, M.	Trelawny, J. S.
Glynne, Sir S. R.	Trotter, J.
Gordon, hon. Capt.	Villiers, hon. C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.	Walker, R.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.	Wellesley, Lord C.
Greene, T.	Wood, C.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.	TELLERS.
Hill, Lord M.	Young, R.
Hope, G. W.	Baring, H.

The words added. Question as amended agreed to.

THE POLISH NUNS.

MR. COWPER rose to move for copies of despatches received by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, containing information about the persecution inflicted upon the Basilian nuns of Minsk. Those unfortunate persons were obliged to perform work of the severest description, and to which they were totally unaccustomed, in order to increase their sufferings; and such was the extent of the cruelty which they suffered, that it would be a stigma on the age if the statements to which he referred were proved to be true. Such was the extent of the cruelty which it was said had been practised towards those unfortunate nuns, that some persons were disinclined to believe them in consequence; but he regretted to say that the cruelty did not form any such evidence of the want of truth in the statement, to his mind, when he recollected that it was a religious persecution. The Inquisition had long since been put down by the indignant voice of the civilized world—the persecutions on account of differences in religious belief which had taken place in this country formerly, were now universally stigmatized—and the Sovereign whose name was most associated with religious persecution was styled the "bloody Queen Mary;" and he thought it would be consistent with those feelings for the Members of that House to express their horror at the occurrence of those cruelties in Russia, if they had really taken place. Religious opinion ought not to be made the ground of punishment, nor ought those who differed from the established religion of a country to be placed in the same category with offenders against the State, or with the perpetrators of serious crimes. He believed that they should not be discharging their duty as advocates of humanity and of liberality of opinion, if they allowed such statements to be circulated abroad, without any attempt on their part to ascertain if they were true, and to express their sorrow and regret if it were so. If the accounts which had been given by the nuns were false, there were many opportunities of contradicting them on the part of the Russian Government; for they had been widely circulated for a considerable period in Rome and Naples, in the former of which cities the Emperor had recently been, and therefore must have had an opportunity of denying them personally. He did not accuse the Emperor of Russia of being personally cognizant of the tortures which had been said to have been inflicted upon those unfortunate nuns; but he was anxious to ascertain if it were true that such cruelties had been exercised in the Emperor's dominions. He knew that one of the evils

of a despotic Government, such as that of Russia, was, that the subordinate officers who executed the laws and ordinances of the State, were not subject to the same responsibility as in this country, There was no public press to observe upon their conduct, and no such freedom of observation upon them as in this country; so that those occurrences might possibly have taken place without the knowledge of the Imperial Government. These convents were establishments from which public observation was excluded; and it might happen that the cruelties which had been described had taken place without the authority or sanction of the Government, and therefore that the Government had never heard of their occurrence and should have never heard of them but for the fortunate occurrence of the escape of the three nuns who had survived the cruelties. He trusted that, under all those circumstances, the Government would have no objection to lay on the Table of the House any information which they possessed with respect to those proceedings, for he thought that the public had a right to have as correct a knowledge as possible of these facts. If the information were not correct, they would have the advantage of knowing the reports of these cruelties were unfounded; but, if they were correct, he felt it his duty to raise his voice in deprecation of those offences against humanity and of religion, in the name of which they had been perpetrated.

Mr. WYSE seconded the Motion, and said that the statement which was the subject of the hon. Member's Motion, had excited considerable attention, not only in Germany and other countries, but in Russia. A statement appeared in the *Frankfort Journal* of February 17th, a paper which was influenced by Russia, to the effect that the ukase of the Emperor, upon which it was said the cruelties had been in a great degree founded, was not authentic: that the bishop, Siemasko, was not bishop of Wilna, but of Polosk; and that no such convent existed in Minsk as that described; and that, in fact, the whole statement was an exaggeration or falsehood, put forward for political purposes. That article was replied to by certain Polish and Lithuanian exiles in Paris; and he (Mr. Wyse) held in his hand a statement, published in Brussels, by the Marquis de Beauffort, which left a strong impression that these cruelties, unheard of in the history of modern Europe, had taken place. The statement gave a history of the persecution, which had lasted seven years, and was subscribed with the name of the Abbess Makrena Mieczyslawsk, and certified by Maximillien Ryllo, the rector of the Propaganda, by the Abbe Jelowicki, and the Abbe Leitner. It would appear from that statement that the account which the hon. Member gave was not only correct, but that even greater cruelties than he had mentioned had been committed. It appeared that from 1838 to 1845 those persecutions continued, and that out of sixty nuns who had suffered those horrid barbarities, only a few survived. It appeared that those females were employed in chains at public works, and in a description of employment only fitted for men; that they were obliged to break stones to build a palace for the apostate bishop; and that they were daily beaten in the presence of the soldiery, and ultimately subjected to atrocities, a recital of which it would not become the House to hear detailed. He should be sorry to see that House interfering in the affairs of other countries; but a country like this, possessed of such free institutions, and to which Europe looked, ought to express its feeling of sympathy with a gallant and unfortunate nation who had always adhered to their national religion; and as every one in that House respected adherence to conscientious dictates, they would, he trusted, express their approval of the virtuous resistance of those females to tenets which they did not agree to.

Sir ROBERT PEEL: I am not enabled to communicate to the House any despatches which could throw light upon the painful subject to which the Motion of the hon. Gentleman refers. Her Majesty's Government has not received any report or despatch from the Representative of this country at the Court of St. Petersburgh, and I am, therefore, without any authentic information upon the subject. The only communication having reference to this statement of which we are in possession, is a communication from the British Consul at Warsaw, who is a most respectable and able gentleman; and he states that, having seen reports in the French newspapers of barbarities (for I can apply no other term) said to have been committed in Poland upon a community of nuns, he thought it his duty to write to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to say that he had not been able to ascertain that any such occurrence had taken place in Poland; and he added that it was his confident belief that

the reports were either altogether without foundation, or greatly exaggerated. That is the whole of the information which has reached us, and it is, therefore, impossible that Her Majesty's Government can lay on the Table any further information on the subject; and on that ground it is evidently impossible that I can agree to the Motion of the hon. Member. It would cause me the deepest regret if I heard that there was any foundation for the statement to which the hon. Gentleman refers; and I must say I certainly have a strong persuasion that nothing of the kind has taken place with the sanction or authority or knowledge of the Government of Russia. I understand, from a private communication from the Representative of the Emperor of Russia in this country, that when the Emperor was recently in Rome, the subject was mentioned to him by the Pope; that the mention of such reports greatly surprised the Emperor; that he said if anything of the kind had taken place, it was without his knowledge or sanction; and that he should cause a strict inquiry to be made, as to whether such occurrences had taken place or not. If anything of the kind took place, I believe that it was without the sanction of the Government of Russia; and I am confident that a strict inquiry into the truth of those reports will be instituted by the Russian Government. I would strongly advise, therefore, every individual Member of this House to suspend his judgment altogether with respect to these reports. It is possible that they may be—and I hope the results of inquiries on the part of the Russian Government will prove that they are—without foundation, or grossly exaggerated. In our capacity as a branch of the Legislature, I would strongly advise that we should not set the example of interference with other Governments, or take any course which would be calculated to present that appearance. I know how impossible it is for any Minister of the Government to express the feelings which would naturally arise from hearing such statements as that to which the Motion relates. I cannot divest myself of my individual feelings with respect to it; and I must declare that if the statement were true, it would cause me the greatest regret —not to use a stronger expression—that such a violation of the rights of conscience and of humanity should have taken place. That is my feeling, as an individual, with respect to this subject; but as regards the House of Commons, I would strongly advise, whatever may be our individual feelings, to refrain from interfering in the domestic concerns of other nations. How have we been occupied for four or five hours preceding the introduction of the hon. Member's Motion? We have been discussing an allegation that a certain number of the inhabitants of this country, subjects of the Queen, were employed—no charge having been made against them, they being in a state of pauperism—in grinding bones, some of which bones were supposed to have been human bones, and that the means of subsistence afforded them were so scanty, that, finding some of the bones in a decomposed state, so that the marrow could be extracted, a general engagement took place amongst them in order to get possession of those decomposed bones; and the party who obtained possession of a portion, hid that portion, in order that he might at a favourable opportunity use it for food. Now, I ask, can anything be worse than that statement? and yet, should we not resent it if the French Chambers thought it necessary to take notice of this circumstance? Should we not require of them to have confidence in the House of Commons and the justice of our Executive Government? And I ask would not that confidence be justified? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department has given directions to put an end to that operation; but that is beside the question. No other Government has a right to interfere in our domestic concerns. As our example would be looked to by other countries, we ought not to establish the precedent of interfering in the domestic affairs of other nations. I repeat the hope that every Gentleman will suspend his judgment on this subject, as it is highly probable that the reports are untrue or grossly exaggerated. We ought to rest satisfied with the assurance of the Russian Government that an inquiry will be instituted. I am in possession of no despatches which would throw any light on the subject that I could lay on the Table of the House; and that will perhaps induce the hon. Member to withdraw his Motion. On other grounds I strongly deprecate the establishment of a precedent which would be fraught with danger, and which might be followed by other countries with different feelings from that which actuates hon. Members to bring forward this Motion; and I hope that we shall not, therefore, set the example of intermeddling with the domestic concerns of neighbouring States.

Mr. COWPER said, that after the statement of the right hon. Baronet he would withdraw his Motion; and he trusted, from the right hon. Baronet's statement, that there would be an investigation into the truth of the reports.

Sir R. PEEL repeated that it was the opinion of our Consul at Warsaw that the report was unfounded, or grossly exaggerated; and that he understood it was the intention of the Emperor to cause an investigation to be made into the truth of the report.

Mr. T. S. DUNCOMBE said, that when the Emperor of Russia was in this country, the Parliament agreed to an Address to Her Majesty, expressing their gratification that the Emperor of Russia had come to this country, at great personal inconvenience, to visit Her Majesty, and expressing a hope that the opportunity would be taken to improve the amicable relations between Russia and this country. The people of England hoped that they should be able to ascertain whether these atrocities had taken place or not. He was sorry to find that the case of the Andover Union had been mixed up with the atrocities committed upon the nuns at Minsk. The English Parliament had instituted inquiries into the state of the Andover Union; and he hoped that they would hear of the Emperor of Russia instituting inquiries into the atrocities perpetrated upon the nuns of Minsk. He trusted that the House would hear that there was not the slightest foundation for the statements which had appeared in the public organs of intelligence, instead of there being "exaggeration," as the right hon. Baronet called it, in these statements: and he hoped that on a future day the right hon. Baronet would be in a position to give them more authentic information on the subject than it was now in his power to afford.

Mr. M. GIBSON said, that however desirable it might be to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of foreign countries, such had undoubtedly not been the policy of Great Britain in reference to the slave trade.

Mr. P. HOWARD reminded the House of an occasion on which his hon. Friend below him (Mr. T. Duncombe) had successfully appealed to their sympathies; he alluded to the case of his noble Friend Prince Polignac; and yet the French nation and Government, whose sensitiveness was proverbial, far from resenting our interference, in deference to our representations and the dictates of humanity, liberated that noble man and his fellow Ministers. Considering that on the will of the Russian Autocrat the destinies of so many of our fellow creatures depended, he thought that nothing would be worthy of that House than to adopt a course of dignified supplication. It was impossible to believe that no foundation existed for the reports and statements circulated abroad; he trusted however that, for the future at least, a more temperate policy would be pursued by the Russian authorities, and that the magnanimity of the Emperor would mitigate that persecuting spirit which it was always so difficult to restrain. The persecution of the Basilian nuns was not directed, as had been supposed by the noble Lord, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in another place, against the professors of a new form of faith: they belonged to the United Greek Church, who accepted and had always used the Greek ritual, though in communion with the Church of Rome, in the same manner as the Syrian, Coptic and Armenian Churches followed their respective rituals, although acknowledging the supremacy of the See of St. Peter. The hon. Member concluded by expressing a hope that the union of the two Churches contemplated and almost realized by the Council of Florence, might one day be accomplished. It had been frequently remarked, that the less men differed the more they disagreed; that had unfortunately been the case as regarded the Schismatic and the Catholic or United Greek, who differed in but few points of doctrine; meanwhile he (Mr. P. Howard) trusted that the Czar would interpose his authority, and stay the hand of religious persecution raised against so many of the subjects of his vast empire.

Subject at an end.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, March 6, 1846.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. From the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Cavan, and from Leitrim, in favour of the Protection of Life (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill.—From Bossington, and several other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND) BILL.

The Earl of ST. GERMANS, having presented a petition from the High Sheriff and Grand Jurors of Leitrim in favour of the Bill, said, he thought perhaps the most

convenient course he could pursue would be to explain the Amendments intended to be proposed by Her Majesty's Government, and afterwards to state his views of the various Amendments proposed by different noble Lords. The first Amendment which he intended, on the part of the Government, to ask their Lordships' concurrence in, had been suggested to him by a noble Lord a Member of the other House of Parliament. The effect of it would be to give the Bill, in some degree, a retrospective effect, by enabling the Lord Lieutenant to charge on a district already proclaimed under the existing law the expenses of the supernumerary police now employed there. The second Amendment was to Clause 17, for the purpose of including tea and coffee-shops in the operation of the clause; for he saw no reason why places where tea and coffee, though not malt liquors and spirits, were sold, should be exempted from visits of the police. The next was a proviso that all offences under this Act should be tried at assizes of Oyer and Terminer, or general gaol delivery. He now came to the Amendments of the Lord Chief Justice. The first proposed that no proclamation of a district should take place until application had been made for that purpose to the Lord Lieutenant by three justices of the peace for the same county, in a form provided. But to him (the Earl of St. Germans) it appeared that where arbitrary power was vested in the Executive Government, it was better that the whole and undivided responsibility for the exercise of such power should be left on the Executive. There were official reports made to the Executive Government daily of the outrages committed in every part of Ireland; and he thought, therefore, the power alluded to should be confined solely, and without any intervention, to the Lord Lieutenant. He did not propose, therefore, to adopt that Amendment, or to introduce another in its place. With respect to the next Amendment of the Lord Chief Justice, he should be most anxious to introduce some provision to carry into effect the spirit at least of the Amendment of the noble and learned Lord. As the Bill stood at present, an individual who was taken into custody by the police, being out of his House between the hours of sunset and sunrise in a proclaimed district, must remain in custody until he was delivered in due course of law. The Lord Chief Justice's Amendment went to give the magistrate, before whom he was to be taken before noon the next day, the power of dismissing him if he was satisfied with the reasons he gave for being out of his House, or if not of committing him to gaol. But that, it appeared to him, would place the magistrate in a very invidious situation. In all probability the magistrate would be either the landlord or the near neighbour of the person arrested, and he would be loth to take on himself the responsibility of committing a man, if he could give anything like a plausible excuse for his having been out. But it was intended that petty sessions should be held once a week at least in every proclaimed barony: he thought it better that such a prisoner should be brought before the petty sessions, and that the magistrates at such petty sessions might liberate, or bail, or commit to gaol these offenders when brought before them. These were all the Amendments of the Lord Chief Justice; and when the noble and learned Lord saw the Amendments of the Government, he (the Earl of St. Germans) could not help thinking the noble and learned Lord would see that in spirit, if not in letter, they embodied the objects the noble and learned Lord had in view. With respect to the Amendment of the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Brougham) respecting the change of venue, he (the Earl of St. Germans) must say he hoped the noble and learned Lord would withdraw it, and bring the subject forward in a general and comprehensive form, providing for the removal of the venue both in cases of misdemeanors and of felonies. In cases of felonies the prisoner had the right of challenge, but not in those of misdemeanors; of the two, therefore, a power of changing the venue was more wanted in the former, which the noble and learned Lord did not provide for, than in the latter, which he did. It was well known that the main difficulty in Government trials in Ireland was the procuring of witnesses. No change of venue could secure the personal safety of a witness. On his return to his home he would be subject to the same ill will as if the cause had been tried at his own county town. He hoped, therefore, the noble and learned Lord would consent to bring in some general and comprehensive Bill. Now, with respect to the Amendments of the noble Earl opposite (Earl Grey), the object of the first was to deprive the Judges of the power of transportation for being out after the hours proscribed in the Bill. The

only vindication of this measure was as the application of an extraordinary though necessary remedy to an extraordinary evil. To that principle the House, as it appeared to him, had already assented. If it were necessary, then, to put a stop to these disturbances, the question came, what punishment was sufficient to deter from the commission of such offences? The object of all punishment was to deter effectually. Now, what criminals in Ireland dreaded the most of all punishments, was transportation. He believed that one or two examples of punishment of these offenders by transportation would produce more effect than a multiplication of examples of imprisonment, which was the object of the Amendment of the noble Earl. In 1835, Mr. O'Connell had approved of that part of the Coercion Bill of 1834, which had been called for, he said, by the Catholic clergy; for he said he knew to what crimes absence from home at nights led, and he professed himself ready to adopt the regulation permanently, and insert it in the Whiteboy Code. He added, that as long as the people in the disturbed districts were not prevented from going out at nights, so long would they have these offences committed. To prevent that was the only means of success. That provision would have the effect of protecting life and property; and no injury would be inflicted by preventing a man leaving his House at night to commit outrages. [The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: But Mr. O'Connell says nothing about transportation.] No, but he was giving his opinion of the terrible nature of the crimes which that punishment was destined to aid in repressing. In fact, this was the case: they could not punish criminals; they could not procure the necessary witnesses; and they had no resource, therefore, but attempting to prevent the crimes which they could not punish. Unless they inflicted what might appear a disproportioned punishment, they would not succeed in their object. But to return to Mr. O'Connell's opinion upon former similar measures. In reference to the Bill of 1834, he stated that it intended to remedy great evils—systematic agrarian outrages. The only infringement upon public liberty was the power given to deal with those who were found out at night, and if successful, it would produce the greatest blessings to Ireland. It was, however, a mistake to suppose that the offence to be punished under the measure was simply that of being out at night. They had to do with the possible case of men going abroad to commit outrages, or actually engaged in their perpetration—of which no actual evidence could be procured. Suppose the case of men being discovered wandering about at night with pistols in their pockets—a crime or crimes having been committed in the neighbourhood, of which, although no witnesses could be brought forward, no moral doubt existed as to the perpetrators—by the ordinary law, men found under such circumstances could not be questioned by the police. It was such cases that the Bill under consideration was designed to meet. He had already trespassed upon the House in entering at some length into the details of the cases, on the occurrence of which the necessity for the Bill was founded; but he did not think that noble Lords who were prepared to withhold from the Judges of the land that power which he contended was essential for the safety of life and property, could be aware of the real state of things. Those who doubted it could not be aware of the numerous representations which had been made to Her Majesty's Government by grand juries, without distinction of party or religion. On the 10th of November, last year, the magistrates of the north riding of the county of Tipperary agreed to a representation, stating, that on no former occasion had there been serious grounds for more apprehension and alarm even in that county than at present; that the varied character of agrarian outrage seemed now to have settled into a systematic course of private assassination, utterly defying all the powers of the law, and urging some more stringent enactment, without which they much feared that the foundations of society would be shaken. The document then proceeded as follows:—

"During the summer months a short period of calm, as usual, succeeded; but we have now, with the deepest regret, to inform your Excellency, that not only has the approaching winter been ushered in by several murders or attempts to murder, occurring in rapid succession; not only have we to deplore the awful death of Mr. Patrick Clarke, a most respectable gentleman of amiable and inoffensive character, but we have evidence to satisfy us that the lives of very many persons, whom we could name, are in imminent danger. A wholesome dread and terror of law does not exist; but, on the contrary, our county seems to be in the possession of a set of hired assassins whom the law cannot reach; and we are only surprised, that among the middle and lower classes, in their unprotected state, individuals can occasionally be found bold enough to come forward as witnesses in a court of justice. We feel convinced that all sources of information are dried up

through the sympathy of the ill-affected, and the intimidation exercised towards the well-disposed. We do not dwell on the numerical amount of crimes committed, because it is to their character that we wish to point attention; ejectment from land is no longer the sole origin of these sad occurrences. The slightest cause is now sufficient to endanger life, and no one can tell when that may arise. We do not urge the insecurity of landlords' rights; we do not complain of want of support being afforded to ourselves by your Excellency's Government; but we point attention to the insecurity of the peasant's hut, to the scenes of desolation there constantly occurring, to the prevalence of that species of crime which saps the root of overy virtue, and is rapidly eradicating all trace of the original character of the Irish peasant. In the name of God and our country, we protest against such a system being further allowed to continue with impunity. In the firm belief that no one more than your Excellency regards with horror and detestation the state of things to which we have alluded, and which we make bold to say is not exaggerated, and in the earnest hope of some prospect being afforded us that an early application will be made to Parliament to strengthen the hands of the Executive by the enactment of some Statute which shall decisively check the existing system of assassination, we now beg leave to present to the representative of our Sovereign this humble and dutiful Address, to which we shall await the reply with the utmost anxiety."

This document was signed by Lord Dunally, a man of very liberal political opinions, an excellent landlord, and in no way a supporter of the present Government. It presented a most melancholy picture, which he believed no measure short of that which Her Majesty's Government had proposed would be sufficient to change. Many persons well acquainted with the state of Ireland were of opinion that the measure fell short of what was necessary; but it was the anxious wish of the Government not to go a step beyond what was requisite for tranquillizing the country. There were one or two other communications which he should wish to read to the House; and the first was one from the county of Roscommon, dated July, 1845. It was as follows:—

"We, the undersigned, grand jurors of the county of Roscommon, assembled at Summer Assizes, 1845, deeply regret to express our conviction that the present condition of our county is most alarming, and that, fearful as its present state may be, it is likely to be much worse when the long nights of winter afford additional facilities to the disturbers of the public peace. We are satisfied that a most wide-spread conspiracy exists, and is daily extending its limits; that immense quantities of arms and money have been collected by the disaffected; that committees of assassination are regularly organized and supplied with instruments to carry out their orders; and that jurors, witnesses, and all classes of the population are subject to the direst intimidation. That a very large addition has been made to our police force, and one which, in its present overtaxed condition, the county is badly able to endure; that the best exertions are being made by the local and stipendiary magistracy, but that, notwithstanding, crime remains unpunished, outrage unrepressed, and confidence unrestored, and matters are daily becoming worse; so that, unless some adequate steps be taken to render the laws and their administration effective, the whole framework of society must be rent asunder. It does not become us to dictate specific measures to Her Majesty's Government, but we feel it an imperative duty to lay before them the condition of our county; and we beg to assure them, that in any measures they may deem necessary for the restoration of public order, they may reckon on every co-operation which we, in our capacities of magistrates or landed proprietors, can in our respective localities possibly afford."

This was signed, among others, by the O'Conor Don; and he would ask, was he a man likely to recommend any measure that he thought of an unnecessary arbitrary character? The next memorial he would refer to was from the same county, and was adopted at the spring assizes of the present year. The grand jurors in this document urged upon his Excellency and the Legislature the adoption of some decided measures for the suppression of assassination in Ireland, and observed that no measure would be effective unless accompanied by a rapid and summary mode of trial and punishment in the proclaimed districts. This was signed, among others, by Mr. Denison, a gentleman of influence and also of liberal opinions. He mentioned the fact of these gentlemen having signed such memorials, to show that even those who opposed the Government on political grounds took the same view with them on this important matter, and that the course which Government was now adopting had no connexion with political or party matters. He believed that that very day their Lordships must have been shocked to hear of the attempt which had been made to assassinate a gentleman who was once a Member of the other House of Parliament, one of the most humane men and best landlords in Ireland — he meant Sir David Roche. Here was a letter from the Lord Lieutenant to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, containing an account of this occurrence:—

"Dublin Castle, March 4, 1846.

"My dear Sir James—I regret to say that intelligence has just reached us that Sir David Roche and Mr. Lyons, two magistrates of the county of Limerick, were fired at on Monday, about four miles from the town of Limerick, where they had been to attend the grand jury. The occurrence took place at about 7 o'clock in the evening, when many people were on the road. All the letters which have reached us upon the subject will be forwarded by this post to the Secretary's office. Sir David

Roche is an excellent landlord, and employs a great number of people; liberal in his politics, and highly respected in his neighbourhood. What can be said of the state of society when such men are selected as victims? Believe me, my dear Sir James, very truly and sincerely yours,

"HEYTESBURY.

"Right Hon. Sir James Graham, Bart."

An account, furnished to his Excellency by the foreman of the grand jury at Limerick, stated that—

"Sir D. Roche and Mr. James Denis Lyons were proceeding to their homes, in the carriage of the former, shortly after having attended court to be sworn in, at or about the hour of 7, when, as they were passing an orchard enclosure, two shots were fired at them in rapid succession, fortunately without effect."

To this communication an answer was returned by the Lord Lieutenant, assuring the grand jury that every exertion would be made to bring the offenders to justice. A communication received by the Lord Lieutenant stated that no cause could be assigned for this attempt, as Sir D. Roche was one of the best of landlords, and gave a great quantity of work in the country, except that it proceeded from one of his tenants, who had a dispute with his sister-in-law about some land, and Sir David, as was quite right, protected the widow. Their Lordships would see that the opinion he had formed was based on the information of men thoroughly acquainted with the state of Ireland. Nothing could be more painful to him than to propose any measure which tended to abridge the liberty of the subject; but the first duty of the Government was to extend that feeling of personal security and protection to every member of the State, which was his first and most valuable right. With this view the present measure had been introduced, and he now moved that their Lordships resolve themselves into a Committee of the whole House on the Bill.

LORD BROUGHAM did not rise to oppose the proposition, nor to enter into the subject last broached by his noble Friend, and illustrated by those very afflicting statements which covered one with shame at the very thought that there should be a part of our fellow countrymen leading lives so detestable as those of the victims of this delusion—for it could be called nothing else—that they had a right to massacre their landlords for making a lawful and righteous use of their own property, and who were under the still greater delusion on this account—that if there was any one class of the community who had a direct and immediate interest in preserving the rights of property and keeping sacred the rights of proprietors, landlords included, it was the peasantry of the country, who lived under those landlords. He did not mean to say one word to countervail the statements of his noble Friend, or in reference to the afflicting statements from the different grand juries to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. They were all agreed that something must be done; that some measure was required for the peace of Ireland; that, if possible, it was necessary to devise some efficacious measure to repress those crimes that were unfortunately so frequent there; and without exaggeration, to make Ireland once more become, in all its parts and provinces, a habitable country—a country that could be inhabited safely by the peaceful subjects of the Crown. But he might admit all this, and yet not admit that this Bill was good for the purpose. His noble Friend had applied to him to postpone an important part of the Amendment proposed by him and by his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chief Justice. Now it was not an Amendment of his noble and learned Friend, though he concurred in it. He (Lord Brougham) had proposed it, because the Lord Chief Justice objected to having the provisions it contained confined to Ireland, and to cases of misdemeanor. He, in fact, took the same view as the noble Lord opposite. He wished to confer the general power of making the trial of offences transitory instead of local. He would accede to that proposal, and postpone for the present the consideration of that Amendment, to be made part of a more general measure. As to the objections of the noble Earl to the proposal of the Lord Chief Justice, that the magistrate should have the power to dismiss or imprison a man found out at night, he had only to say that he was sure the noble and learned Lord would feel that the proposal of giving that power to the sessions embraced the spirit of his Amendment. The object of the Amendment was this, that if a man were taken before a judge and jury to be tried for the offence, he would have to prove by witnesses, not by any explanation of his own, why he was out after sunset; but by the proposed Amendment, if his own explanation of the reason why he was out after sunset was satisfactory to the magistrate before whom he was taken, it would be in the power of that magistrate or the sessions to set him at liberty, without requiring witnesses. Such a pro-

vision would be a great improvement in the Bill, and a great safeguard to the public liberty. One word as to transportation. He understood that in Ireland very great weight was attached to the punishment of transportation. All the noble Lords and Gentlemen from Ireland he had heard speak on this subject stated that it had a great effect in deterring from the commission of crime. He wished, however, to offer a hint as to the manner of its execution. He held it to be of the utmost importance that when any person, either for misdemeanours or for any other offences, should be sentenced to transportation, especially in Ireland, no interval whatever should be allowed to elapse between the sentence and the execution of that sentence. The sending a convict from the dock to the vessel which was to convey him away had tenfold more effect in overawing criminals, and deterring them from the commission of the like offences in time to come, than double the punishment, perhaps, if not combined with that speedy and prompt execution. He did not mean immediate removal to New South Wales, without leaving time for the interposition of the Crown; but that the commencement of the execution of the punishment should be immediate, and that no time should be lost in having the delinquent removed to the hulks. They all remembered the celebrated case which occurred in Yorkshire twenty or twenty-two years ago. A person was charged by a man and his daughter with committing a capital felony—a rape, in short, on the latter. The case was proved to be a conspiracy. It commenced at nine o'clock in the morning. By ten o'clock it was evident to the Judge that there must be an acquittal—that the evidence was downright perjury. He asked, accordingly, whether the grand jury were discharged. They were not. Then let a bill be sent up. A true bill was found before eleven. The prosecutors in the first case, the prisoners in the second, were tried at twelve o'clock, and at three they were in a cart, condemned and sentenced, on their way from York—the execution of the sentence of transportation having actually begun. The excellent effect of this prompt commencement of the punishment was well known to all who attended the northern circuit at that time. He hoped, also, that when a murder was committed, the Executive would revive the old practice of executing the murderer in the district where the crime was committed. He would defer any other observation he had to make till after they went into Committee; only remarking, that the noble Earl should observe that some of the memorials read referred to the fact that juries required to be protected in the discharge of their duties.

The House then resolved itself into Committee on the Bill.

Clause 1 was postponed for the purpose of discussing Lord Denman's proposed Amendment when his Lordship could be present.

Clauses 2 to 5 were agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to after a desultory conversation respecting the power of magistrates to compel witnesses to come forward and give evidence although no person could yet have been charged with the crime.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 14 inclusive being money clauses, providing for the payment of money out of the Consolidated Fund, and for a rate to be made and levied to recover again from the county or district the sum so paid, it was proposed that they should be expunged.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH observed, that the English Consolidated Fund ought not to be made to advance the sum in the first instance for a crime committed in Ireland. This was money for a local purpose.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, there must be no delay in the payment of the sum, but the words would be found to be, "from the Consolidated Fund arising in Ireland."

These clauses being expunged up to Clause 13,

EARL GREY observed, that Clause 13, providing for the levying the rate to repay this sum to the Consolidated Fund, threw the burden upon the occupiers as distinguished from the landlords, and upon the small occupiers, those whose premises were under the value of 4*l.*, and they were not to deduct this rate from their rent. It was not just thus to exempt the landlords: though they were not the cause of these outrages and evils, Ireland never would have got into its present state, the existing state of society there would never have been such as it was, if the landlords, as a body, had done their duty to the population under them. He should object to this part of the Bill, if it returned with Clauses 13 and 14 in it.

The EARL of RODEN remarked, that when the noble Earl thought proper to state that the present condition to which society was reduced in Ireland was owing

to a neglect of duty on the part of the landlords, he should be guilty of a dereliction of duty if he did not give the statement as direct a contradiction as the courtesy of the House would allow him to give to any individual who ventured to make such an assertion. With regard to these clauses, he thought that making the people pay compensation was the best way of putting a stop to the atrocities which had been committed.

Lord FARNHAM, also, as a resident landlord, must repudiate in the strongest manner that Parliamentary language would admit the unwarrantable attack made upon the landlords of Ireland. All the harm that he wished the noble Earl for that remark was, that he was an Irish landed proprietor, and obliged to live there.

Earl GREY did not wish to be misapprehended on this subject, and therefore he would state at once that he believed that of late years an improvement had taken place in the conduct of the landlords of Ireland towards their tenantry; but, if they looked to the past history of that land, the awful state of things now existing would be seen to be a direct consequence of the dereliction of ther duty by the upper classes of that country, which was an historical fact known not only to England, but to all Europe. ["No, no!"] Noble Lords opposite might repudiate it; but the opinion of the universe was settled upon this point, and nothing they could say would alter it. He trusted the improvement was going on; but even of late years, that acts of great injustice and tyranny had been committed upon the peasantry of Ireland, was not to be doubted.

The Earl of WICKLOW was surprised that the noble Earl who had just sat down should wish to throw this rate upon the present landlords, as he withdrew all blame from them. [Earl Grey: No, no.] If history showed that the blame rested anywhere, it was on the gross misgovernment which Ireland had suffered from this country.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, the question to be considered in reference to this clause was how the pecuniary local burden was to be laid so as to create the strongest interest in the locality to prevent the commission of crime. The offences contemplated by the Bill were not committed by the landlords, but by the lower orders, and by strangers frequenting the district, who found a ready reception in the house of the lower orders; the burden, therefore, ought to fall on those who gave the assassin encouragement, and they ought to be made to feel that they were incurring the danger of a penalty which would come home to themselves. He consequently gave his support to the clause.

The Earl of CLANCARTY expressed his concurrence in what had fallen from the noble Marquess.

Earl GREY quite agreed that the occupiers should bear their share of the burthen. All he asked was that the landlords should also pay their share, so that all classes might have the strongest interest in the preservation of order.

The Earl of WICKLOW observed that the landlords would have to bear a share of the burthen as occupiers.

The clause was then expunged, as was also the following clause, they being money clauses.

Clause 15, giving power to apprehend persons out of their dwellings between one hour after sunset and sunrise in proclaimed districts, being read,

The Earl of WICKLOW proposed the introduction of the words "under suspicious circumstances," which, he said, were to be found in the Bill of 1833.

The LORD CHANCELLOR expressed his opinion that the Bill would not be at all injured by the introduction of the proposed words; and it was agreed that the words should be inserted in the clause, but, as it required further consideration in other respects, it was postponed.

Clause 16 was next read, it being understood that the introduction of the words "under suspicious circumstances," in the preceding clause, would necessitate the insertion of similar words in the present.

Earl GREY said, he had to move to this clause an Amendment, of which he had given notice. The object of the clause was to make it a misdemeanour for any person in a proclaimed district to be out of his abode between one hour after sunset and sunrise except upon some lawful occasion, which he would be called on to prove; and by the 21st Clause it was enacted that a person so offending would be liable to transportation beyond the seas for a term not exceeding fifteen years.

The LORD CHANCELLOR observed, that as the clause was to be altered, and the words "under suspicious circumstances" to be introduced, the noble Earl had better apply his argument to the clause as it was intended to be altered.

Earl GREY thought that he should be

able to show that the introduction of the words "under suspicious circumstances" did not make such a material difference as the noble and learned Lord seemed to imagine. The effect of the two clauses would be to make an offence against a police regulation subject the offender to the severe punishment of transportation for fifteen years; and the Amendment which he intended to propose would have the effect of limiting the punishment for this offence, which was no moral offence, but a mere infringement of police regulation, to imprisonment for a period limited to one year. It appeared to him that the power proposed to be conferred by this Bill upon the Executive Government was in the highest degree objectionable. He believed the noble Earl (Earl St. Germans) would not deny that, for he told them that nothing but a case of overwhelming necessity would justify their Lordships in adopting so severe a measure, and that such a necessity existed. He (Earl Grey) called upon their Lordships to consider how great an infringement of the personal liberty of all the inhabitants of a proclaimed district this Bill involved. During all the hours of darkness—in winter for somewhere about sixteen hours out of the twenty-four—no man was to be allowed to stir out of his house without incurring the risk of transportation for fifteen years. From four or five o'clock in the afternoon till past eight on the following morning, during the month of December, no inhabitant of a proclaimed district in Ireland was to be allowed to set his foot outside the door of his cabin without rendering himself liable to this severe punishment. He might not even venture from home during that time to visit a friend, or to enjoy at any place a few hours of harmless recreation. Nay, he dared not even go to his work in the morning, or return from his work in the evening, so as to gain the advantage of the hours of daylight, without rendering himself liable to arrest at the will of a police constable, and to be kept in confinement in default of proving what no man could prove—that he was out with innocent intentions. If he (Earl Grey) were to act upon his own judgment, he would have proposed the omission of this clause altogether; but as he had heard from his noble Friend to-night that it was absolutely necessary, in the disturbed districts of Ireland, to prevent the population from leaving their homes at night, he deferred—though most reluctantly—to the judgment of the noble Earl; and he was compelled, under such circumstances, to consent that, in the disturbed districts of Ireland, the Executive Government should be armed with the extraordinary power of confining the whole population to their houses during the time he had mentioned. But he must say that no deference to the judgments of others, no arguments he had yet heard, could induce him to consent that the infringement of a regulation of this description—that any offence which was made an offence by Act of Parliament, and which involved no moral guilt—should subject a harmless and unoffending man, who thoughtlessly, or perhaps forgetfully, might violate the law, to be torn from his friends, and consigned, for a period of fifteen years, to a penal colony at the other extremity of the globe. To this severe punishment any might subject himself who sought relief from the tedium of a fifteen or sixteen hours' confinement in a miserable cabin, by merely visiting a neighbour. Was this, he would ask, a fit punishment for so venial an offence? Such an extremity of punishment, as compared with the character of the offence, was so shocking to every feeling of natural justice, that he for one could not consent to the Bill in its present shape. He knew he should be told that this provision was not intended to apply to persons of harmless and unoffending character; but that only those who were apprehended under suspicious circumstances would be subjected to this severe punishment; but that did not remove the objections which he entertained to those clauses as they stood at present in the Bill. It was said by the noble and learned Lord (the Lord Chancellor) that the words "under suspicious circumstances" were to be introduced into the Bill; but they did not, in his opinion, materially alter the portion of it to which he objected. He wished that some of their Lordships would define what "suspicious circumstances" were. He wished any noble Lord would inform him how they were to distinguish between the case of a man who was apprehended during the prohibited hours, and who had left his home on a lawful occasion, and that of a man who was abroad with some guilty object. Let them suppose the case of a man who left home during the hours of darkness to visit a sick relation or friend, and that of another man who, under pretence of a similar object, left home at the same time, in order to join a party of Whiteboys, and who had his blunderbuss concealed in a neighbouring bog. These two men might

be apprehended on the same road, and within a quarter of an hour, by the same person; and how were they to distinguish between the man who was innocent, and the man who had left his home with a guilty intent? They might also suppose the case of a man who left home to consult his priest about some pressing family affairs, or on other urgent business, and who, under similar circumstances, might be apprehended; and how was he to establish his innocence? He protested against the adoption of this Bill, which, for the mere fact of a man's being out at night—a fact which implied no guilty intent whatever, but was compatible with perfect innocence, would subject him—unless the accused party could prove his innocence, which as to intent was utterly impossible—to the unreasonably severe punishment of transportation. But he might be told that there was, after all, one means of ascertaining whether a man ought to be punished or not; that it was perfectly true, in the cases to which he had referred, innocent and guilty parties might be arrested under nearly similar circumstances, but that, when the extent of punishment to be inflicted was considered, they might be guided by a man's character. Yes, one man might be known to be a dangerous character—a man of whom it was necessary to get rid, and he would be transported; while a man who, there was every reason to believe, was an unoffending and innocent person, would either be at once discharged, or visited with a merely nominal punishment. But if this was the ground on which they intended to proceed, he begged them to mark how dangerous a principle they were laying down. Would any noble Lord in that House approve a measure which would empower the Lord Lieutenant, if a person was reported to him as a dangerous character and likely to be concerned in disturbances, although no proof of the charge might be adduced, to issue a summary order for the transportation of such an individual? He was sure there was no Member of that House who would not at once declare that such a power ought not to be granted to any Government. If they really intended to transport men because their characters were bad, he thought it would be much better to do so openly and avowedly, instead of convicting them of a most venial offence, for which they were nominally punished, and punishing them really on account of their character. He considered that if this measure was passed in its present form, a most tremendous and unjustifiable power would be given to the Executive. But it might be said that the Judges, by whom the sentence would be determined, would be able to ascertain the characters of the accused parties. But such investigations could not be conducted publicly; and while, on the one hand, it would not be difficult in Ireland for a person who was really guilty to bring forward witnesses who would give him an excellent character; on the other hand, if it was determined that an innocent person should be sacrificed, it would not be difficult to render his guilt apparent. It must be remembered that character was merely a matter of opinion, and the province of Judges was not to try questions of opinion, but matters of fact. Under the proposed law, any man, however harmless and innocent, might, on the secret statement of a person who might be misinformed, perhaps malicious — made without the accused person having any opportunity of contradicting it—be condemned to the very severest punishment; and his family, and all dependent upon him, might be involved in the deepest distress. What were the grounds of suspicion on which a man was to be subjected to this punishment? Was it to be deemed a suspicious circumstance that a man who had been treated with extreme harshness by his landlord, had expressed a strong feeling on the subject? Was it to be considered a suspicious circumstance that a man who had been the victim of the clearance system, which he (Earl Grey) was afraid was still continued in Ireland, should have expressed himself with some warmth towards his landlord? Was such a man to be suspected of a connivance at those agrarian outrages which were committed in Ireland, or of being connected with those midnight legislators who took upon themselves to redress grievances in that country? But although a man might be entirely innocent of any connexion of this kind, or of any intention to injure his landlord, what would be the effect of the measure now before them? If a man had been ejected by his landlord from a small farm which he had greatly improved, and for which improvements he obtained no compensation when he was turned out—if he were made a victim of the clearance system, which had not as yet been discontinued in Ireland, and expressed himself strongly in consequence of this treatment, would not those be called "suspicious circumstances" against the

man who had been so oppressed? Might he not be strongly suspected, and perhaps not without reason, of allying himself with midnight legislators, and thus, the man being innocent, might, under those "suspicious circumstances," be transported, because he had been the victim of gross oppression and tyranny? If he were treated as he (Earl Grey) had described, and gave vent to those feelings which would naturally arise in the breast of any man who had been so dealt with, that would be reckoned ample reason for suspicion, and because he had been the victim of oppression he might be transported. He (Earl Grey) would ask, also, upon whose report a Judge was to determine whether the character of an accused person rendered it necessary that the punishment of transportation should be inflicted? He hoped not upon that of the police; for he was persuaded that a power of that kind was liable to be fearfully abused, and to lead to most cruel oppression. It was notorious that, in former times, the powers possessed by the police were abused for their own purposes; and if such a system were tolerated, he had no doubt that similar abuses would again occur. The Lord Lieutenant had no better means than the Judges possessed of ascertaining a man's character; and if a person was hurried from the prison to the dock, he had little chance of establishing his character, or of disproving the charges made against him, though he might be innocent. How was a man sentenced under this Bill to appeal to the Lord Lieutenant for redress? He was therefore opposed to so severe a sentence being fixed for the commission of such an offence; and he doubted whether such severity was not likely to defeat their object. What, he asked, was at the bottom of this system of agrarian outrage? They all knew that, unfortunately, it was the rooted animosity of the people to the law, and the administrators of the law. From long ages of past misgovernment they had been taught to regard, until lately at all events, with too much justice, the law as their enemy. They were told upon high authority, that there was one law in Ireland for the rich, and another for the poor. They did not forget that state of things—they knew that formerly, if not now, the law existed not for the protection of the humbler classes, but to oppress and degrade them; and unfortunately they had not, with the change of circumstances, unlearnt the lesson which long lessons of misgovernment had taught them. Before they could enact any permanent improvement in Ireland, they must eradicate that lesson from the minds of the Irish people, and must teach them that the law existed not to coerce and oppress them, but to protect them and promote their welfare; and he would ask whether they were likely to be taught that lesson by such a measure as this? He, therefore, should propose, that at the end of the 16th Clause these words should be added—

"And upon being convicted thereof shall be liable to be imprisoned, with or without hard labour, for any term not exceeding one year."

The EARL of WICKLOW said, his noble Friend appeared to have made one fundamental mistake in the whole of his argument. He appeared to treat this Bill as directed against the peasantry of Ireland; whereas it was intended for a directly opposite purpose—for their protection and security. He admitted its apparent inequality of justice, and that the punishment appeared enormous for so small an offence; but why had such a measure been so repeatedly enacted? Because it was found impossible to carry the law into effect without some such provision; and often as it had been enacted, he had never yet heard a single instance of one of those hardships which his noble Friend thought would be the inevitable consequences of it. But he would appeal from the speech of his noble Friend to the speech of the late Earl Grey, when he introduced the Coercion Act of 1833. That noble Earl depicted in strong terms the harshness of its provisions; but he drew an inference very different from that which had been drawn by the noble Lord, and was quite sure that the Bill of 1833 contained much more stringent provisions than the proposed measure. He should, therefore, support the proposed Bill.

LORD CAMPBELL said, there was no such provision in that Act, but there was one making the intimidation of witnesses a transportable offence.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, his impression was, that the Act of 1833 did not contain a provision similar to the one in question.

The EARL of WICKLOW: But it contained one infinitely more stringent, and that Bill was at least efficacious.

LORD CAMPBELL said, that as allusion had been made to the Act of 1833, and as he had, from the circumstances of his being

at that time Solicitor General, and there being no law officer of the Crown in Ireland in Parliament, assisted in passing that Bill, he thought it right to assure the noble Earl (the Earl of Wicklow) that he was mistaken in supposing that that Act contained any such provision as this. The 22nd section of that Act made it a misdemeanor to be out at night an hour after sunset, and before sunrise; but it made it simply a misdemeanor, without allotting to it any particular punishment. [The Earl of WICKLOW: There is a subsequent clause.] There was a subsequent clause, making it a transportable offence to intimidate a witness or a juryman; but that was an aggravated offence, properly made so punishable. The other was simply a misdemeanor. The Amendment of his noble Friend contemplated introducing the same distinction into this Bill; making the offence of being out at night simply a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment; whilst at the same time it would allow the aggravated offence of intimidation of a witness or juryman being punished, as it ought to be, more severely. He was as anxious as any noble Lord to remedy the existing state of things: but he was very much afraid that this Bill was not the proper course. Now, upon the 16th Clause an indictment might be framed to this effect:—that A. B., &c., of &c., was, on the — day of ——, an hour after sunset, found upon the Queen's highway out of his dwelling-house under suspicious circumstances, and not upon his lawful occasions, contrary to the Statute in that case made and provided. That would be a good indictment under this clause; and a person who was out of his dwelling an hour after sunset would come within the clause, if he were out upon some occasion not strictly lawful, although not of that kind which this measure had in view: as, for instance, he might be out poaching, or on some little affair of gallantry. Now, only let the House consider what the punishment was. It was the highest in the law of England next to capital punishment. It was a punishment which had indeed been substituted for capital punishment in many cases: such as horse-stealing, forgery, and the like. By this Bill, then, the same punishment was to be inflicted upon a man for the venial offence of being out at night, as upon a man who had shown himself incapable of social duty. He did not think this a proper cure for the malady which they all deeply deplored, and which consisted in not being endued with a respect for the law. The respect of the people for the law would not be increased by making the law cruel and unjust. He did trust that, upon consideration, their Lordships would find that the object which they had all in view would be more effectually gained by conceding the Amendment of his noble Friend (Earl Grey.) He admitted that the object of preventing the people being out at night in disturbed districts was a very desirable one. The opinion of Mr. O'Connell had been already referred to. Now, whatever might be the errors into which that hon. and learned Gentleman had fallen, and which he deplored as much as any one, it could not be denied that he had always strongly discouraged the practice of marauding parties going about through the country. He repeated that he thought it very desirable that means should be taken to put down that offence; but he thought that that could best be accomplished by making the punishment more proportionate to the offence.

LORD BROUGHAM entirely agreed with his noble Friend who had moved the Amendment, and with his noble and learned Friend who spoke last, that this matter was worthy of the greatest attention—that it was a point of great importance; and he was sure it had not been taken up from any factious, or what was called a party motive. He owned that at first he had had some doubts on the subject; but he meant no disrespect to the arguments of his noble Friends, or to the scope of their purpose, when he said that the fullest consideration when he had been able to give to the subject had ended in his having an opinion in favour of the Bill, and not in favour of the Amendment. His noble Friends, as it appeared to him, had been led away by their feelings with regard to the coercive provisions of the Bill, and had not sufficiently attended to what really were the powers which were about to be bestowed by Government and Parliament on the courts of justice. His noble Friend (Earl Grey) had assumed—and in doing so had entirely begged the question—that the offence which was to be visited with transportation was what he was pleased to call the venial offence of being out at night after dark. But that was not the case. It was not the venial offence of being out after dark which was to be visited with transportation; it was the offence, which he (Lord Brougham) did not call venial, of being out at night under suspicious circumstances—of not being out

upon a lawful occasion, and therefore unlawfully out at a time when the Legislature had declared that the public security required that the people should not be out at night under suspicious circumstances, and upon unlawful occasions. That was the offence; and here he must stop to say one word respecting what his noble Friend (Earl Grey) had repeatedly urged in the course of his speech—namely, that this was no moral offence. He (Lord Brougham) never liked to hear distinctions taken between moral offences and what were called legal and illegal offences. It was the duty of every good subject to hold that when the laws of his country prohibited certain acts, those acts so prohibited became offences and immoral things in the case of any man who committed them; and if you say that such and such offences are not moral offences, and that such and such others are immoral, you tend very much to break down the securities you have against offences, and to diminish the public dislike for crime, and the public reprobation of disorder. He protested also against its being said that the offence in question was necessarily in all cases to be visited with the punishment of transportation for 15 years. This was not the fact. The court before whom the case was to be tried was to be armed merely with the power to examine into all the circumstances of the case, and award a punishment not exceeding transportation for fifteen years; and, in order to make it more certain that this power should not be abused, and that no man should be unjustly, thoughtlessly, and indiscriminately tried, it was proposed by a judicious Amendment, which had been introduced that night, that, instead of being sent before a local magistrate, all such prisoners should be tried before a Judge of Assize, or a Special Commission. And if upon trial it should be found that the offence was not an aggravated one, the court would have the power to impose a fine of *5s.*, or to award a week's or a month's imprisonment, in place of the extreme punishment of transportation for 15 years, which his noble Friends had always assumed to be the *minimum* in place of the *maximum*.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS: It is now proposed to be limited to seven years.

LORD BROUGHAM: Well, that is the shortest term for which you can send a man abroad. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell) had talked of the severity of transportation for this offence. But did his noble and learned Friend forget that even under the Act of 1833 a man might be imprisoned for three years in a common gaol for the venial offence of being found out of his own house after dark, and that was not much better than transportation. But it was said why not define the circumstances which constituted the offence? Because they could not be defined. Why, the being out at night with fifty or sixty people might be no aggravation at one time, and it might be at another. When there was a rebellion in a district, and a mob of fifty or sixty people assembled together after dark, that would be a grievous aggravation. It might be no aggravation for one man to have a bludgeon in his hand; but if there were fifty people all with bludgeons in their hands, it would be a very aggravated offence. Or, suppose a man was found out of his house after sunset in a proclaimed district with a concealed pistol, that would be a great aggravation; and if he (Lord Brougham) were the Judge who tried the case, he would take that into view in reckoning the punishment. A noble Lord had just reminded him, that under the Whiteboy Act it was an offence to be found with a shirt over one's coat; and no doubt, in a peculiar state of society, this did become an offence. In the course of the discussion allusion had been made to the grievances of Ireland, and the necessity for remedying them. When the proper time came, he should be ready to listen to any suggestions for remedying those grievances; but he solemnly protested against mixing up these with the present question, for they had no necessary connection with each other; and, if mixed up together, the result would only be to lessen the abhorrence which all felt for the curse which desolated Ireland, to comfort the wrongdoer, and dishearten the peaceful subject. On the whole, he felt it to be his duty—though a very painful one—to support the measure; and in doing so so he felt that he was giving his support to a measure infinitely less stringent than that which he had himself introduced into that House personally for the acceptance of their Lordships; for, although it was true that there was a superior degree of severity enacted in this Bill which was not in the former, in so far as it made a misdemeanor a transportable offence, yet it was undeniable that the court-martial clauses in the former measure were much more severe; and, though these clauses had been much objected to, he had

persisted in adhering to them, and the result had justified his anticipations, for not one single man had been tried under those court-martial clauses, the terror produced by seeing the Government resolved to do its duty in protecting life and property having rendered it unnecessary to put them in operation.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE wished it to be understood distinctly that in voting for the clause as it stood, and against the Amendment, he did not mean to express his approbation of the Bill generally. He thought it extremely ill-drawn and ill-contrived; and if its duration were not very much modified, he should reserve to himself the right of voting against it upon the third reading. But if Ireland was to have a Bill in the nature of a Coercion Bill—a temporary Bill, in which view alone he supported it—that invested extraordinary powers in the Government beyond the Constitution, he must certainly support the clause, for if it were thrown out, there was nothing in the Bill to arm the Government with powers beyond the common and permanent law. He understood the Government did not pretend to call for the powers of this Bill, except for a limited time, in order to put an end to a most dangerous state of things; and in this view he supported the clause. Was it, he would ask, teaching the people to respect the law to let them, year after year, see that by combinations they could defeat the law, and that those who were inclined to observe it might be murdered or injured with impunity by those who so combined? The Legislature must show there were powers in the Constitution which from time to time might be exhibited with extraordinary rigour, and that the legitimate authorities were able to vindicate their power when necessary. His noble Friend who moved the Amendment laboured, throughout all his speech, under a mistake. When illustrating his argument, he drew on his imagination for a picture of what he called a victim of "suspicious circumstances," and it was always the same picture, of a man ejected from land, and this man directing his mind towards vengeance against his landlord. He regretted that the returns he moved for on a former evening, were not on the Table—if they were, he could prove to the noble Earl that landlords were not the victims of the assassin, so much as the honest and unoffending peasantry. The noble Lord who referred to the late attempt made on the life of Sir David Roche, might have quoted from a paper of the same date a still more horrible and barbarous attack on an honest industrious peasant—one who had not the same means of defence as Sir David Roche. This poor man was attacked in his own house, horribly maltreated, and sworn to quit land he had occupied for fifty years. Here there was no question of ejectment; the land he was sworn to give up possession of was not claimed in any way by the miscreants who attacked him; but those who were acquainted with the state of the country would ask no better proof of the man's honesty than this murderous assault. He was not assaulted because he took land over the head of others—but because he had honestly resisted all attempts to induce him to join the illegal combinations that were now the curse of the country. The taking away of arms was another class of offences exclusively directed against the lower orders. Some noble Lords had argued upon this measure as if it were intended to be the law all over Ireland; but they must recollect it was only for those districts in which no wise or honest man would be out after sunset. It would certainly be much better in his opinion if the transportations were limited for seven years; but the best effects of this measure would be, that it would inspire the well-disposed honest people of the country with confidence in the ruling powers, and the evil-doers with terror. If the Government had answered in a firm tone at an earlier period to the remonstrances made to them on the subject of agrarian crime, there would have been no cause for this Bill; but they had shown too much vacillation, too much reliance upon what was called the ordinary course of the law; and it had been made a boast, more than once, that the ordinary law had been maintained in Ireland. The language, in answer to those remonstrances should have been, "We wish to repress crime if we can under ordinary circumstances; but let it be known to honest men they shall be supported, and to dishonest men they shall be punished by a rigour beyond the power of the common law." If that language had been held at the proper time, a great deal of crime would have been prevented. Under present circumstances, the clause now under discussion was the clause alone that would make the Bill of any value.

LORD COTTENHAM would give his support to the Bill, if a limitation was given to its existence, because he thought this was nothing more than an extraordinary expe-

dient to meet an extraordinary occasion. He understood that the Amendments proposed limited the operation of the Bill to a certain period; and he was glad to hear that such a proposal was favourably received with regard to the clauses which made it a crime for a man to be out between sunset and sunrise, unless he could give a satisfactory account that he was not out for an unlawful purpose. It was undoubtedly a great restriction upon the liberty of the subject, for him to be compelled, under a penalty of transportation, to remain in his house during these hours; but still, from what he had heard of the state of Ireland, he was not disposed to say that these restrictions were, in many cases, imposed unnecessarily. The present was a measure of precaution, in order to prevent persons from perpetrating crime; and it appeared to him that the punishment to be inflicted for a violation of it must be limited by the consideration of what was necessary to enforce it, and you would not be justified in carrying it further. It was impossible to deny that if this Bill passed, and a proclamation came from the Lord Lieutenant, that a man who was out of his house before or after a certain hour would be guilty of an offence; for it was an offence to violate the law, and to disobey an Act of Parliament. But he might have no criminal intentions connected with the offences under this law, and thus this offence was capable of every possible gradation. The man might be almost innocent, or he might be very guilty. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) considered that a great improvement had been made by the introduction of the words "under suspicious circumstances," into the measure. He (Lord Cottenham) approved of the clause as it stood; but at the same time he must observe, it would be extremely difficult for a man to show he was out upon justifiable and lawful grounds; and this difficulty constituted one of the greatest objections which he felt to the Bill. He believed, however, that no man convicted under this Bill would ever be transported, because the Judges of Ireland would not exercise their power, under the circumstances, to the fullest extent. If men were transported under this Bill, it would be because they were persons whom it might be thought expedient to get rid of on account of their character in other respects; but if they were not transported at all, there could not be a greater wrong than to have the power. The terror of it, it was said, would produce a good effect—an argument which might induce their Lordships to grant any power that might be asked for; but the power given in the Bill of transportation ought not to be given unless it was intended to be exercised. And although he thought the words "under suspicious circumstances" were properly introduced, he contended that what constituted a suspicious circumstance ought to be designated. He thought it would answer all the purposes of the Bill, in suppressing outrage in Ireland, if a man being out of his house before or after the hours, was convicted under this clause, was detained in custody—he cared not where—for a given time; but he thought the term suggested by his noble Friend (Earl Grey) was too short. The period which he proposed of one year ought to be extended to two or even to three years. This lengthened imprisonment would operate to prevent outrage and crime; but he was perfectly satisfied that so severe and disproportionate a punishment, for such an offence, as transportation, would defeat its own objects, and shock those who wished punishment to bear some proportion to the offence.

LORD MONTEAGLE claimed to possess a little more knowledge of the position and circumstances of Ireland, with reference to this matter, than either the noble and learned Lord who had just sat down (Lord Cottenham), or his noble Friend who moved the Amendment (Earl Grey); and with this knowledge, nothing but the strongest sense of duty could have brought him to support the measure now before the House. If he erred in supporting a measure which was objected to as unconstitutional, and stigmatized as severe, he had the good fortune of erring with some of the best and wisest men that Ireland had produced—those who were most attached to popular institutions, and most strenuous in the defence of civil liberty. He could not approach the consideration of the question as if this was a Bill which had now been proposed for the first time. He would remind the House of the Insurrection Act. He remembered that Lord Plunkett, a warm friend of liberty, defended the Insurrection Act. Not only when in office did that noble Lord propose it, but out of office he warmly justified and maintained it: and his (Lord Monteagle's) late lamented friend, Sir John Newport, who was ever foremost in defending Irish

interests, took the same course, not merely in office, but in opposition. With a generous tone of justice, they stood forward to share the unpopularity and the responsibility of a Government that had performed its duty towards the population of Ireland; and they gave to an adverse Ministry the same strenuous support which they would have given, on such a measure, to their own friends. But the greatest name of all remained to be mentioned. He (Lord Monteagle) knew with regard to this very measure, that at the height of his popularity—nay, at the hazard of his life—Mr. Henry Grattan, the creator of Irish independence, the supporter of Irish liberty, the friend and leader of the people of Ireland, and of the privileges of the Irish Parliament—had no hesitation in giving his uncompromising support to a measure infinitely stronger, more unconstitutional, and more repulsive to all the doctrines wisely laid down for ordinary occasions, than the present. Their Lordships were to consider that the Bill they were now called upon to discuss was not to be perpetual; that it was an exception to the ordinary course of legislation: and that they were dealing with an exceptional case. Every day added to the catalogue of crime to which his noble Friend had alluded. Their Lordships no doubt felt a reluctance in referring to this subject, and still more to the impunity with which crime was perpetrated in Ireland; but he would, nevertheless, take the liberty of calling their Lordships' attention to that subject. He wished to remind the House that that impunity did not arise from any indifference on the part of the Irish people with regard to the crimes committed. No such indifference existed among them; but they were prevented by intimidation from aiding in the suppression of these crimes. It was said that the Irish people did not come forward to give evidence or to act as jurors; but since the days of Sir John Davis, who told them that no people were greater lovers of justice than the Irish people, down to the present time, they were never accused of having a desire to encourage the perpetration of crime; but when they asked them to come forward at the hazard of their lives, and of everything that was dear to them in life, they expected more than could be got from any individual. The upper classes were comparatively safe in exerting themselves for the suppression of crime, but the poor were not safe; and he therefore would say, that the present Bill was properly entitled, "A Bill for the Protection of Life and Property," because there was at present no adequate protection for either in that country. His noble Friend declared that he had no objection to the punishment being fixed under this Act for one year, or for two or three years. But he would put it to the House, if a punishment of three years were to be imposed for such offences, what became of all the arguments used by his noble friends, or of their alleged love of justice? If the penalty inflicted by the Bill, as it at present stood, were so very unjust, and if in its stead a punishment of imprisonment for three years were to be a proper regulation to adopt, what then became of nine-tenths, ay, or of ninety-nine hundredths, or of nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandth parts of the arguments of his noble Friend in favour of the Amendment? But he would meet the proposition of his noble Friend in respect to the substitution of punishment, by asking which penalty was more likely to be effectual? He would reject the proposal of his noble Friend as one which, while it was infinitely more cruel to the individual—["No, no"]—he would maintain that an imprisonment for three years would be more cruel as a punishment for the offence, than the other penalty proposed to be adopted, while it would be also less effectual as a preventive of crime. The present Bill was the mildest and the least unconstitutional measure of the kind that had ever been submitted to Parliament to meet such an evil; and in corroboration of this fact, he might observe, that the Bill which had been supported by Mr. Grattan, authorized the trial of parties offending against its provisions before a bench of magistrates, and without the intervention of a jury. Surely that was a more objectionable enactment than the present Bill, which fixed the trial to take place before a Judge of the land, and with the aid of a jury. But another important consideration was, that the man who was disposed to outrage would, after an imprisonment of three years, come out a perfect adept in crime, to be again let loose among his former associates: and, taken in this point of view, it was absurd to suppose that transportation would not be a better remedy than imprisonment. Such a person, by being removed altogether from his guilty associates, would cease to be mischievous by his removal to a convict settlement. He did not pretend to say that, on many occasions, when Insurrection Acts were in force in

Ireland, there might not have been cases of abuse under them. In fact, it was scarcely possible to imagine the administration of any law of great severity without some abuses taking place; but he would say this, that having been connected with a county in Ireland in which Insurrection Acts had unfortunatey been in force during nearly the whole of the periods of their existence in that country, he had never heard of a single case there in which the powers conferred by these Acts had been applied to improper purposes. While he supported this Bill—a measure intended to be local in its application, and temporary in its duration—he felt bound to say that he would be sorry to trust to an Insurrection Act, or to any such measure, for improving permanently the state of Ireland. They should look to a totally different class of measures to effect that object; but these measures of improvement ought in his opinion to be kept totally distinct from the present Bill, because, if both were brought forward at the same time, they would raise the inference in the minds of many, that the acts of outrage which they wished to suppress had some justification, or were connected with evils which it was in the power of Parliament to prevent. He had no inclination to support any measure calculated to diminish the liberty of the people; but feeling, as he did, that the greater punishment was more likely to prove the better remedy for the evil, he wished, in giving his vote against the Amendment, to guard against misconception, and at the same time to take his full share, as an individual Member of Parliament, of the responsibility of such a measure.

LORD LANGDALE said, the greater part of the noble Lord's speech, in opposition to the Amendment, referred to the principle of the Bill, to which nobody objected, and seemed to be founded on the supposition that the Amendment had been brought forward with the intention of obstructing the measure, which none of those noble Lords by whom the Amendment was supported had any intention of doing. There was no question as to the principle of the Bill; and he hoped they had not got to such a state of things, that any attempt to improve a Bill was to be regarded as an attempt to obstruct its progress. Had any one doubted the necessity of employing an extraordinary remedy for the evils against which they had to provide? Under the circumstances in which Ireland was placed, it became necessary to take certain precautions, and to make it an offence to appear out of doors between sunset and sunrise on the following day. Nobody doubted the necessity of that precaution, or that in adopting it they were under the necessity of making that an offence which in itself, and without regard to this measure, would be an act perfectly innocent in its nature. It was in itself no offence to be out of doors during these hours; but the liberty of being abroad at such times was considered to facilitate the commission of offences of a dangerous character, and the Legislature, therefore, thought proper to adopt the provisions of the present Bill, and to make the fact of a person appearing absent from his home after nightfall an offence. Now, it was plain that such an offence admitted of every degree of aggravation. It was an offence, or a violation of the law, to do that which the law forbids to be done; but still there might be such a justification for a person being absent from his home, that the offence would be of the most trivial kind; whereas, on the other hand, it might be aggravated to the greatest extent. The question then arose, was there to be one law and one punishment, subject alone to the discretion of the Judge who tried the case, for these different degrees of offence? It was said that the punishment of transportation for seven years—and he was glad the penalty had been reduced to that extent—was the utmost that could be imposed under the Act, and that any degree of punishment under that was to be left to the discretion of the authorities. Discretionary law was not very advisable under any circumstances; and the Amendment of his noble Friend simply was, that, if there were no circumstances of aggravation, they were not to exceed one year's imprisonment. But his noble Friend never said that if there were to be great aggravation of the offence, they might not go the whole length of the proposed penalty. The question was merely which course was best to adopt, and which was most calculated to correct the state of Ireland. He believed they all concurred in the same object. There was no disposition shown on the part of any noble Lord to obstruct, or to place impediments in the way of the measure which the Government had thought right to bring forward; but his noble Friend and others were of opinion that the Government had not selected the mode of punishment which would be best on all occasions; and agree-

ing in that opinion, he should vote for the Amendment.

EARL GREY said, he would at once adopt the suggestion of his noble Friend, who thought that one year might be too short a period of imprisonment, and he would make it two years. He wished to be permitted to add, that among all the noble Lords who had spoken on this question, not one had attempted to deny that every variety in degree of offences might be committed under the Act.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, a noble Lord had reminded him, that it did not appear to be generally known whether the Government had given up the punishment of fifteen years or not. He begged to state that such was the fact, and that seven years had been adopted as the extreme penalty.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, he would also wish to know from the noble Earl what was the limit intended to be given to the operation of the Act? When they were about adopting a measure of such a character, however necessary it might be, it was most important that a limit should be fixed to its duration.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, the noble Marquess was aware that the clause as printed fixed the duration of the Act to five years; but both he, and, he believed, his noble and learned Friend (the Lord Chancellor), would not have any insuperable objection to fixing its duration for three years, and the end of the then existing Session of Parliament.

The EARL of COURTOWN expressed a hope that the Government would persevere in fixing the continuance of the Act at five years.

The EARL of WICKLOW said, the Bill would meet with great opposition in another place, and it might be impossible to renew it hereafter. He thought, therefore, that they should put in the words, "to the end of the next Session of Parliament," and not "to the end of the then Session of Parliament."

LORD COTTENHAM said, the Government, knowing when the Act would terminate, could apply for its renewal, if thought necessary, in one Session, as well as in the Session after it.

LORD REDESDALE suggested, that a fixed day, say the 1st of November, 1849, should be named in the Bill, because circumstances might occur to bring the Session of Parliament to a sudden termination, which would prevent the subject being taken into consideration.

The EARL of LONSDALE begged to remind the House that they were going away from the question immediately before them.

House divided. For the Amendment: — Contents 7; Not Contents 38: Majority against the Amendment 31.

List of the CONTENTS.

LORDS.	
Cottenham	Carrington
Campbell	Lilford
Langdale	Kinnaird
	Grey

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE then moved that the operation of the Bill be limited to three years, ending the 1st of October, 1849.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE said, he thought even three years too long a period; and if the Amendment of his noble Friend were not agreed to, he would, on the third reading, vote against the Bill altogether.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, it was of importance that the House should be as unanimous as possible on the subject, and he would therefore consent to the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to. Bill passed through Committee. House resumed.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Friday, March 6, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW WRIT. For Stafford, *v.* the Hon. Swynfen Thomas Carnegie, Commissioner of the Treasury.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Railway, &c. Deposits; Out Pensioners' Payment (Greenwich and Chelsea); Out Pensioners' Services (Chelsea and Greenwich Bill).

2°. Metropolitan Buildings (No. 2); Joint Stock Banks (Scotland and Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Bright, Mr. Moffatt, and Mr. Williams, from several places, for a Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Evans, from several places in the County of Derby, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Lord James Stuart, from Carpet Weavers and others in the employ of James Templeton, Esq., Ayr, and by Colonel Thomas Wood, from Inhabitants and Ratepayers of Chelsea, for Commercial Reform.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Shipowners of the Port of Sunderland, for Reduction of Duty on Timber.—By Mr. Hume, from Guildry Incorporation of the Royal Burgh of Montrose, in favour of Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Hornby, from several places in the County of Lancaster, for Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By Mr. Duncan, from Baxter Brothers and Company, Flax Spinners in Dundee, for refuting Statements respecting Ill-treatment of Girls in Factories.—By Mr. Williams, from Samuel Gordon, Esq., of Aungier Street, Dublin, for Inquiry into Injuries perpetrated upon him by Persons connected with the Court of Chancery in Ireland.—By Sir William Somerville, from Mayor, Aldermen, and Council of the Corporation of Drogheda, for Encouragement of Mechanics' Institutes in Ireland.—By Mr. Bright, Mr. Busfeild, and Mr. Duncombe, from a great number of places, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Mr. Wilson Patten, from Members of the Board of Guardians of Garstang Union, for Altera-

tion of the Poor Law.—By Mr. Young, from High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Cavan, in favour of the Protection of Life (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Greene, from Grand Jury of the County of Leitrim, for Alteration of Law respecting Railways (Ireland).

COMMERCIAL POLICY—CUSTOMS—CORN LAWS.

House in Committee on the Customs and Corn Importation Acts. On the Question—

"That in lieu of the Duties now payable on the importation of Corn, Grain, Meal, or Flour, there shall be paid *until the 1st day of February*, 1849, *the following Duties*," &c.—

MR. W. O. STANLEY rose for the purpose of moving the following Amendment—

"There be paid a fixed Duty of five shillings per quarter upon Wheat."

Although he represented an agricultural constituency, he had not hitherto troubled the House, because he was desirous of paying undivided attention to the arguments on both sides, with a view to ascertain whether he ought or ought not to alter the opinions he had always held on this subject. The noble Member for the city of London had said on a late occasion that "he thought the interests of the country were deeply involved in the immediate, complete, and tranquil settlement of the question." He cordially agreed with the noble Lord, but he was prepared to prove that not one of his three propositions would be effected by the proposed measure. Nobody would say that they would produce an immediate settlement of the question; the vote of the other night decided that it should not be immediate. Nor would it be a complete settlement of the question; and as to a tranquil settlement of it, the hon. Members for Durham and Wolverhampton had avowed that they would continue to agitate as long as any part of the present duty upon corn remained. Looking to the future, nobody could believe that this would be a tranquil settlement of the question. With a view to bring about a complete and tranquil settlement, he had put his Amendment on the Notice-book; and if his arrangement were accepted, he was strongly of opinion that the country would readily submit to it. It would feel that a moderate fixed duty ought to be maintained—that it would be a useful source of revenue, and a slight protection to the farmer, by which the consumer could not be materially injured. The noble Lord had himself admitted that a 5*s.* duty upon wheat would not raise the price more than 1*s.* per quarter. If the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government wished to carry out his own proposition, he would support this Amendment; and while he advocated a 10 per cent duty on cotton, linen, butter, cheese, &c., it was not unreasonable to expect that he would afford the same degree of protection to corn: 5*s.* on wheat, 2*s.* 6*d.* on barley, and 2*s.* (or rather 1*s.* 6*d.*, which he wished to substitute in the terms of his Amendment) upon oats, would not be more than equal to 10 per cent. With regard to the question of revenue, the right hon. Baronet ought not lightly to throw away a source of 500,000*l.* annually. The right hon. Baronet was himself in favour of a 4*s.* duty for a limited period; and why should he object to a duty of 5*s.* permanently? He now appealed to the formidable party opposite—to the 265 Members who were fighting a battle under adverse circumstances, one of which was that they had been deserted by their own supporters. Would they refuse to accept his proposal? Would they not pause before they threw the country into the tumult of a general election, when they would have to array their forces in the counties to meet the League in the towns? If as a body they would unite with him, they would have a much better chance of an equitable settlement than if they were to resort to extreme measures: they would then not only be supported by their own partisans, but they would disarm the powers of the League. He did not believe that the measure would be carried elsewhere, and the result would be continued agitation. He submitted his proposition, convinced that it would not only be a just and fair settlement of the Corn Law question, but that it would be injurious to no interest in the Empire.

COLONEL WOOD said, that he had not as yet taken any part in these long-protracted debates, and he would now trespass for a short time on the House. He was sure that all the great interests of the country, and particularly the agricultural interest, were suffering severely from the great delay that was taking place in adopting the measure of the right hon. Baronet. The whole corn trade was completely paralysed. There was not a farmer who was not waiting to see how this proposal of the right hon Baronet would be disposed of. Who were the parties connected with the agricultural interests who would most suffer from this delay? It was the small tenant-farmers about whom the hon. Gentleman professed to be so much interested. The large tenant-farmers might perhaps be able

to suspend their sales, but the small tenant-farmers must prepare for their Lady-day rents. Their barley and their oats were already disposed of: the little wheat they had remained to be sold. They were losing 3*s.* or 4*s.* on every quarter of wheat now brought to market, because the trade was suspended; and it was his firm belief that if this question were disposed of we should see the price of wheat rise instead of fall. That was the first injury which was sustained by the small tenant-farmer. Now for the last. By the delay of this measure the price of corn had fallen—the duty on the importation of foreign grain was rising. There was not a ship-load of corn that arrived in any part of the United Kingdom that was not immediately warehoused, and the consequence would be that when this measure was disposed of there would be a large accumulation of corn in the warehouses, which would be poured out for consumption, and utterly swamp the market. So much for the agricultural interest. But there was another class of society concerned in a measure to which the hon. Member for Finsbury had alluded, viz., a measure to alter the law of removal, to which the poor were now subject. Every week's delay in passing that measure was consigning some poor family to the Union workhouse for the rest of their lives. If Gentlemen were so anxious for the benefit of their poorer fellow countrymen, let them not delay this measure; but let this amelioration of the law of settlement travel with the other measure, and whilst they were taking care of themselves, as some supposed, let them take care of their poorer neighbours into the bargain, and rescue the poorer class of society from the general law of removal under which they were now suffering, and by which some poor families were cast into a parish in which they had not been for forty or fifty years of their lives. He was decidedly opposed to the Motion of the hon. Member who had just sat down. In his own opinion the time had arrived when the Corn Laws ought to be immediately and entirely repealed. He had voted for the last thirty years for every Act of Parliament that had regulated the importation of corn, and he had no hesitation in saying that every one of those Acts of Parliament were perfect failures. He remembered when the Secretary at War stated that the Act of 1815 was the most unwise Act the landed interest ever could support. He voted for the Act, and there was a great cheer of astonishment that anybody could assert that the Act of 1815 was a failure. He had no hesitation in saying that there never was an Act of Parliament placed on the Statute Book which so speedily proved the futility of all enactments to divert the calamities over which there could be no human control, and which the Legislature might materially aggravate, but could not alleviate. In 1816 was the most calamitous harvest ever remembered. On the 15th August, 1815, the opening price was just below 80*s.*, and the ports of the country remained closed during all August, September, and October; and when a little dry corn would have been of the utmost importance to mix with our damaged corn, not a grain could be taken out of bond; and it was not till the 15th of November that any sound corn was entered. The ports were opened in 1816, and they remained open till August, 1818, when there happened a wet week, which raised the price; a large quantity of foreign corn flowed into this country, and for three years the country felt the effect of the importation. From 1815 to the present moment he would undertake to prove that every one of these Acts of Parliament had been failures. There was one reason why he should vote against the Motion of the hon. Member—it was because he was sincerely anxious that this measure should pass the two Houses of Parliament. He thought the right hon. Baronet knew better than other Gentlemen what was likely to pass the two Houses of Parliament. He should vote for this measure, because he thought the right hon. Baronet knew what was likely to succeed; and the other branch of the Legislature ought to have a fair field open to them to do some good. He hoped they would amend the Bill, and send it back with a clause in it for a total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. He was satisfied that if the House of Lords adopted that course—and he firmly believed that as a body they would consult their own interests: there was no part of the landed proprietors whose estates were better prepared to meet any change, if any change should follow, which he believed would not be the case—if they should send the Bill back again, amended, as he hoped, he was sure that the cry from one end of the country to the other would be, "Thank God, we have got a House of Lords!" He sincerely hoped the House of Lords would adopt that course, and with that view he should support the Motion of his right hon. Friend.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN said, that his gallant Friend had at the commencement of his speech charged him and his Friends with causing great and reprehensible delay by these debates; but in the latter part he challenged them to enter into a discussion with him upon all the Corn Laws which had been passed since 1815. There was, he thought, as much discrepancy between these statements as when his gallant Friend had at one part of his speech said that the measure of the right hon. Baronet would raise the price of wheat, and in another that it would make no difference at all. The right hon. Baronet had said that the effect of the measure would be to raise the price of wheat 1*s.* or 2*s.* per quarter; but his gallant Friend said that it would raise it 3*s.* or 4*s.* His gallant Friend had said also, that the alteration of the present cruel law of settlement was delayed by the present debates, and that they were responsible for the evils inflicted by that law upon the poorer classes of the country. Now, as far as the famine in Ireland was concerned, the case would be worse, if the price of provisions was raised; and as the law of settlement had no direct connection with the present measure, he begged to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the suggestion of his gallant Friend, that the measure relating to the law of settlement should be permitted to precede the present question—which should be postponed in order to keep down the price of wheat. He could not see how his gallant Friend could get out of this difficulty. Granting the premises of his gallant Friend, they could come to no conclusion but this—that as there were many Gentlemen in that House who received this not as a question of mere imports, but as a great financial and commercial change; and as these Gentlemen would persevere in an obstinate discussion of the question—if the right hon. Baronet had reason to believe that the price of provisions would be raised, and if he agreed with his gallant Friend, who was so zealous a supporter of his—as to the necessity of a change in the law of settlement, the least return he could make for that support, was to grant his request, and to let the law of settlement precede the decision of the Corn Law. But as the question of delay had been urged against them, he egged to call the attention of the House to the state of the case with regard to the delay which had taken place in these debates. With regard to the length of time which had been consumed, he did not believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite thought them to blame. Let the House look to the condition of the Notice-book. It would have been in the power of so large a minority so to have clogged the Notice-book that the progress of the debate would have been seriously retarded. Now, with the exception of his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, there had not been a single notice placed on the Notice-book by hon. Gentlemen who were opposed to the Government on this subject. [An Hon. Member: There's the Motion of the hon. Member for Pontefract.] He did not allude to Motions made as Amendments to this question, but to Motions which would retard the debate. There was not one notice from that side of the House except the notice of his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire. But let them look upon the other side of the House. There was the hon. Member for Athlone, who had brought forward certain charges against his noble Friend the Member for Buckingham, and his noble Friend the Member for Chichester. [Mr. Collett: My charges were not against the hon. Members, but against the Peers.] But the charges were of a nature that directly concerned his noble Friends, and were intended to draw from them explanations and statements in reply. He did not impute any blame to the hon. Member for Athlone for the production of the Motion. The hon. Member had brought it forward in the discharge of his duty. But what he said was this—that if they on that side of the House had been desirous of delaying the debate, they might have entered into a discussion upon the motives of the hon. Member for Athlone, and produced a protracted debate upon the hon. Member's Motion. But not one of his noble Friends had risen, and the Motion had been very speedily disposed of. Let the House then look at the case of his hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire. His hon. Friend had brought in his Motion for a Committee to inquire into the fraudulent objections to the right of voting in his county. The right hon. Baronet did not oppose the appointment of that Committee, and his hon. Friend would have raised no further discussion upon it. But the hon. and learned Member for Liskeard had given notice, not simply of his intention to ask for leave to bring in a Bill upon the subject, but of his intention to ask that leave as an Amendment to the Motion of his hon. Friend. This would necessarily

lead to a debate. Now, he did not blame the hon. and learned Gentleman for the pursuit of such a course; but he wanted to free himself and his friends from the charge of having caused a factious delay to the continuance of the debate upon this question. He would also beg to tell his gallant Friend that in his opinion a full discussion was better—seeing the strange confusion of parties which prevailed upon this question, and seeing how the subject had been protractedly, and, it might be, doggedly discussed—than if it had been hastily disposed of. As a principle opposed to the practice of the country for centuries was now, for the first time, to be introduced, a brief or hasty disposal of it would, in his opinion, have been most improper. But, however bad the famine might be in Ireland, he must remind the House that they were not responsible for the not issuing of the Order in Council, against which the only reason he had heard was that the noble Lord opposite had advised it. Nor were they responsible for the non-introduction of a temporary measure for the relief of Ireland, nor for the refusal of the Government to give precedence to the unopposed proposal with regard to Indian corn. Nor were they responsible that Parliament had not been assembled before the 22nd of January. The country would not sympathize with the Government nor with hon. Gentleman opposite in charging them with undue delay; and he gave notice to the House that whenever the same charge was repeated, he would cause still further delay by rising and contradicting it. As to the Motion of the hon. Gentleman opposite, he did not intend to vote upon it, as he did not intend to take any part upon any of the Amendments which might be introduced to the measure of the right hon. Baronet.

Lord G. BENTINCK said, that the hon. Gentleman who had proposed this Amendment had said that it would lead to a tranquil settlement of the question. He, however, could not flatter the hon. Member with the hope that a *5s.* fixed duty would lead to anything like a tranquil settlement of the question. No settlement of this question could now be satisfactory, unless it were proposed in a speech by Her Majesty from the Throne to a new Parliament. Whatever settlement might be made by the present Parliament would only be regarded as a settlement brought about by treachery and fraud. As to his gallant Friend, he could not understand how—not to be inconsistent with himself—he had not voted with the hon. Member for Wolverhapton the other evening. [Colonel Wood: I did not vote at all.] His gallant Friend had, however, said that there was no party in the country upon which the House had turned its back; but there was certainly one upon which his gallant Friend had turned his back, and that party was his own constituents. He could not understand why the right hon. Baronet did not postpone the consideration of the measure until he had brought forward the question as to the settlement of the poor. The complaint as to the state of the settlement law reflected not upon his friends, but upon the Government. It was the Government who were chargeable with all the evils of the present settlement question. He had never supported any measure for the prohibition of the importation of corn. He had constantly supported every measure admitting the importation of corn on occasions of temporary exigency; but he had specially supported and consistently adhered to the principle of the sliding-scale. Those hon. Members who spoke of the state of the Corn Law and the effect of the sliding-scale, should recollect that in 1816, when wheat was at 112*s.* in England, it rose to 116*s.* at Vienna, and 127*s.* at Stuttgard and Munich; and in 1817 when wheat was 112*s.* in England, it was 127*s.* at Stuttgard and Munich, and 141*s.* in France. When, therefore, hon. Members who supported the Government spoke of the evil effects of the system of the Corn Laws and the sliding-scale, it should be borne in mind that the Corn Laws had always prevented the price of corn from arriving in this country at the famine level which they had attained on the Continent.

Colonel WOOD said, he had been charged with deceiving or deserting his constituents. Now he believed that his views were in accordance with the opinions of the majority of his constituents. He thought he knew as much of his constituents as any one; and he declared his belief that from the Lord Lieutenant downwards to the tenant-farmer the majority of them concurred with him on this question.

Lord J. RUSSELL merely wished to explain that he had not suggested the opening of the ports by an Order in Council, but by a short Bill, to which he believed no one would have raised any objection. As to the introduction of maize, he had recommended not that it should be a separate measure, but that instead of

forming a part of the general Tariff, it should be introduced at the end of the measure upon the Corn Laws.

SIR J. TYRRELL could not help saying that he had heard the observations of the hon. and gallant Member for Brecon (Colonel Wood) with extreme astonishment —inasmuch as the hon. and gallant Gentleman had hitherto been regarded as the very Nestor of Protection. Especially was it a subject of surprise to him that the hon. and gallant Member should be in a state of such excessive ignorance as to the opinions and feelings of his constituents upon this question, because, a requisition was already in a state of very considerable progress calling on the hon. and gallant Member to resign his seat—a requisition which he hoped the hon. and gallant Member, on account of the utter discordance between his opinions on the subject and those of his constituents, would be impelled, by his own high sense of honour, to accede to by resigning his seat as requested, particularly as the requisition was signed by large numbers not only of the gentlemen of property, but of the class referred to as so much the object of solicitude by the friends of this measure, *i. e.* the tenant-farmers. There was an association also of which he had heard, entitled "The Amalgamated Farmers' Company." He did not know how many shares the hon. and gallant Member was prepared to take in that concern. While he was on the subject of ignorance, he might be permitted to suggest a course which he believed would, while not interfering with public business, give great public satisfaction. He meant that while the agricultural interest accused the Government of treachery, and demanded that the sense of the country should be taken, the Ministers would leave the independent Members to carry on the business of the Session (the only pressing portion of which appeared to be the railway business), and meanwhile conduct an appeal to the country on the present measure: with such an appeal the agriculturists would be satisfied; without it it was not possible that they should be satisfied, especially while they saw in such places as those for which the Law Officers of the Crown sat, opinions entertained on this important subject quite at variance with those which were advocated by those learned Gentlemen. This he could assure the Government, that the agricultural party were prepared to fight the measure by every means which the forms of the House afforded. It was their duty so to do—their duty to protection, as it would be to the Crown, were its interests directly, as he believed them to be indirectly, affected by the measure.

LORD WORSLEY recommended the withdrawal of the Amendment, as a division would be a useless waste of time, with no prospect of success.

MR. CURTIS said, seeing the hon. Member for Sunderland in his place, he wished to set him right as to a statement the hon. Member had made the other night.

MR. GREENE: It is not competent to the hon. Gentleman to refer to speeches delivered on a former occasion in this House.

MR. CURTIS: Well, then, Sir, I will just state, it has been said that the wages paid to agricultural labourers in Sussex are only 8*s.* a week. They are on the contrary 12*s.* a week, and often 13*s.* or 14*s.* I know that many farmers give 13*s.* or 14*s.* a week, and that if a man be a tolerably good labourer he can easily get 12*s.* I do not believe that wages so low as 8*s.* a week are to be met with except rarely—and certainly not in Sussex. The hon. Member went on to say he really wondered that the Amendment met with so little support among those who till recently were so favourable to the fixed duty. His own opinion was in favour of a duty of 6*s.* first; then one of 4*s.*; then one of 2*s.*; and then none at all. The farmers thought that they had not been fairly dealt with by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government. They claimed to be justly entitled to relief from the hop duty, and the malt duty, and other burdens. There was a strong opinion gaining ground in favour of a repeal of the malt duty; and it would be powerfully urged on the Government that a proportion of the hop duty should be taken off equal to that portion of the corn duty which was removed by this measure.

MR. HUDSON said, that he had never alluded to the wages in Sussex, and was gratified to hear they were so good, though he was not at all surprised to hear it, believing that most unfounded statements had been made as to agricultural labour; and he trusted that what had been stated would weigh with Her Majesty's Ministers.

Amendment negatived,

MR. MONCKTON MILNES rose for the

purpose of moving the following Amendment :—

"To move the omission of all words in the Resolution respecting the importation of Corn, referring to the cessation or alteration of duties to be paid in 1849."

He assured the House that nothing but a strong sense of public duty could have induced him to come so prominently before them; but having a powerful excuse in the present state of parties—presenting as it did a disruption of all its usual ties—and looking to the suspension of confidence in public men which prevailed throughout the country, and the necessity imposed on every Member of Parliament who had not pledged himself to his constituents to judge the question before the House by the light of his own knowledge and reflection, he ventured to recommend the adoption of the course suggested in his Amendment. He might be told that the character of mediator between two great parties—one flushed with victory, and the other unsubdued by defeat—was ungrateful and unnecessary; and indeed the issue of his hon. Friend's Amendment did not encourage him to believe that he would receive much support in that capacity from either side of the House. But he would, nevertheless, perform what he conceived to be his duty to his constituents and his country. The object of his Amendment was to continue for an indefinite period; but he should be sorry to say for a permanency—the reduced scale of duties which would come into operation on the Bill before the House becoming the law of the land. That scale was extremely moderate—ranging over very few figures, and affording a strong contrast to the measure of the right hon. Baronet in 1842. When that measure, which the House was now called on to abolish, was brought before them, he (Mr. Milnes) stated his opinion that the scale was too high, and its details too complex. He was then informed that a lower protection to the farmer could not then be given. He opposed the scale of 1842, because he thought the country could not go up and down the ladder, with two great gaps in it, without sometimes falling through it. He objected to that scale, because he thought, considering the increase of population, and the great advance of agriculture, a lower scale would have been sufficient to enable the farmers to do all that they were asked to do—namely, to compete successfully with foreign farmers in average seasons. It was unnecessary for him to say anything at all upon the scale of 1842. After hearing the two right hon. Gentlemen (Sir R. Peel and Sir James Graham) speak of that scheme, one would imagine that some satanic agency had brought it about rather than those two right hon. Gentlemen themselves. It was difficult to imagine how, with their means of information and power of observation, they should in 1842 have considered it the best scale, and that they should now treat it with such bitter vituperation. Therefore he was perfectly consistent in acting up to the principle in commercial matters which he had ever hitherto observed in approving of a considerable reduction of the scale of 1842. He would appeal to the right hon. Baronet whether he ought not gravely to consider whether, by some compromise, such as reducing the duty to a low amount, and then fixing it indefinitely, he would not be able to reconcile his opponents, who now formed a determined and talented protective party. All the arguments of the right hon. Baronet went to relaxation, not abolition, of the corn duties. It was most untenable to attempt to draw analogy between the cases of wool and of corn. It would be scarcely less absurd than to expect credit for 100,000*l.* on account of the previous punctual repayment of a loan of 50*l.* Total repeal involved results pregnant with difficulties and dangers to which a statesman surely could not or should not be insensible. It was a matter of no small importance, to throw away entirely and absolutely the means of raising a revenue from corn—especially with a view to probably increased taxation, while clouds were hovering in every quarter of the horizon. Was it a wise thing, under such circumstances, was it a cautious thing for a cautious man to do, to cast away the power of raising revenue from this source? The effect of such a duty, it was obvious, would be very inconsiderable in its effects on the consumer; while the effect of a removal of the duties would simply be, to throw a large bonus into the hands of the foreign exporter. A natural feeling was aroused in the minds of the agriculturists that they were entitled, in the event of such a measure passing, to call for the abolition of all protective duties; and the inevitable effect would be to awaken, among a large and influential class of the community, a dangerous and hostile spirit, which had been characterized as a "strong, though ignorant impatience of taxation." It appeared unreasonable to lay it down that in three years—whatever might be the misfortunes

which agriculture meanwhile might meet with; whatever the intermediate difficulties and the intervening embarrassments of the country—free trade should be absolutely established. He thought that they had heard enough on both sides of the House on this subject to convince the right hon. Baronet that if he thought that the next three years would be years of contentment and happiness among the agricultural classes, he was sadly mistaken. He did not believe that the agricultural interests would even think themselves conquered by the carrying of this Bill; and he did not think that the Anti-Corn-Law League would be less serious in prosecuting their own intentions and their own objects. But so the right hon. Baronet had declared of his previous Corn Law, which he now deemed a failure. And what prospect was there that his deductions or his expectations as to the next three years, would prove more correct than they had turned out as to the preceding period? Let it be supposed that in 1849 the harvest should be as abundant, and the price of wheat as low, as in 1835, did the right hon. Baronet really mean to say, that if wheat were at the end of his three years' interval, at 37*s.*, the carrying into effect of this proposed law was to be persisted in? If so, the result would certainly be one of the most terrible panics ever experienced. And it was inexplicable to him how the right hon. Baronet could have so signally been betrayed into a departure from his usual cautious and prudent course, and have entered on one rash, uncertain, and dangerous. No person could deny, that if this measure passed, all parties would regard it as a most triumphant victory of one class over another. He might be permitted to say to hon. Friends of his of the protective party—and he hoped that they would understand him to make the observation in a kind spirit—that he did not think that they acted wisely in refusing all compromise on this subject. He did not think that they did right in laying down the principle, that, whatever be the increase of the population, whatever be the increase of the necessities of this country, they would not admit any reduction of the law of 1842. Any man regarding the large increase of population, must consider the Corn Law as a temporary means of keeping in good and active cultivation the soil of this country. When he considered that England was the only wheat-eating country on the surface of the globe, he was not able to resist the conclusion, that to have a full and abundant supply of wheat at the command of England, was not a matter of choice, but a matter of necessity. If they looked to the history of the last twenty years, they would find that the supply of corn was not in any way whatever limited by the Corn Law passed at the time of the peace. Let the right hon. Baronet then proceed in the course he had hitherto pursued, and carry out his own precedent. Let him only act with the same prudence and caution as he had acted in other matters, and he was sure that the right hon. Baronet would reap an abundant reward. He knew well that it was a matter of great difficulty for any statesman in these days, especially after the passing of the Reform Act, to accomplish an harmonious action between a powerful monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a free people. He would ask the right hon. Baronet, however, if he did not think that this measure would have the effect of causing a greater conflict between the middle classes and the aristocracy; and whether he did not think that he was really doing a great injury to the social state by presenting to the world the want of harmony between the English middle classes and the English aristocracy? It was not true that the right hon. Baronet had been swayed by the threats of the Anti-Corn-Law League; but still that accusation would be brought against him. He prayed him not to persist in carrying out this measure in its integrity; for he would not in any degree compromise his own character or dignity by submitting to the strong opinion, or to the prejudices, if he would, of the higher classes of the community. Let him only give this question a fair chance of arrangement, either in this House or the other, and let him remember that he was not the Minister of one party, but of the whole community. Let him so modify this measure, and so adapt it as he could well adapt it to the ultimate common sense of the whole community, and thereby establish the reputation of having brought about the settlement of this great question. Having settled this great question as he had other great questions, let him add the decision on the Corn Laws to the question of decision on Catholic claims, and the great question of currency, and by this means let him show to the world that he had proved the Minister of no class and of no party, but the Minister of the entire community. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving his Amendment.

MR. AGLIONBY wished to call the at-

tention of the right hon. Baronet opposite to a subject that was intimately connected with the Corn Law. He did not think that any person had yet ventured positively to predicate what must be the result of the great measure now before them. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman expected that there would be a diminution in the price of corn and of the money wages of the country, or that, thinking so, whether the labourer would not be greatly benefited. For himself, he looked to great advantages from the repeal of the Corn Law. Another result to be expected—and in this he was sure he expressed a sentiment which he had heard from the right hon. Baronet and others—namely, that whatever might be the results as to the price of corn sold by the farmer, that the produce of the country might be greatly increased by the application of capital and skill, and this for the general interest. It appeared to him that hon. Gentlemen in that House treated the general subject before them according to the experience which they had acquired in their immediate neighbourhood. They treated the question as it affected landlords, and not as it affected or might affect tenants. The way in which he wished to look at this question was the manner in which it would affect tenants in his part of the country—in Cumberland and Westmoreland. In these parts of the country, property was divided into very small parcels—the holders of these small parcels of land were designated "statesmen," analogous to yeomen in this part of the country. This class was composed, as the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department could testify, of very honest and very industrious persons. These were persons without much capital; and he wished now to show the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury how these men might be assisted in case this measure turned into a law. These persons had very little capital; they gave to the land their own industry and that of their families; their holdings varied from 150 to 200 acres, and were in their own occupation, tilled by their families and a few labourers. Now, though they had not capital, something might be done to relieve them from wanting it. Here was a very large class of Her Majesty's subjects holding under our ancient feudal settlement. They were copyholders. But there was another matter which was still worse. In the north of England they had a tenure of this description—that upon the death of the lord of the manor, a two years' fine was laid upon every acre of land within the manor. Let the House consider the effect of this, and ask itself how the tenant could be expected to lay out capital for the improvement of his occupation? He did not refer to this as an objection to the measures of the Government; he only wished, that in the passing of those measures, justice should be done to the large class of persons who were subjected to those fines. Let them be enabled to lay out their capital without imposing upon them such fines—in short, do what the Committee of this House recommended in their Report of the 13th of August, 1838, in which they said—

> "Your Committee have come to the conclusion that the abolition of the copyhold tenure would not only be a great public benefit, but that it should be made, if possible, a national object."

The importance of the question was as great now as then; and it would be very much increased when the measures of the Government had become law. He considered that every facility should be given for enfranchising such copyholds on a compulsory principle. At present he would content himself with drawing the right hon. Baronet's attention to the subject; and if he could do it without embarrassing Her Majesty's Government, he would like to bring forward a measure in some subsequent stage of the present discussion. If such a Bill could be passed simultaneously with the measures now before the House, he thought it would have the effect of inducing a considerable body of agriculturists to give their adhesion to the repeal of the Corn Laws.

Sir R. PEEL hoped the hon. Member for Pontefract would not think he was guilty of any disrespect—a feeling which he entirely disclaimed—if he abstained on the present occasion from entering into a consideration of the arguments which the hon. Member had urged with very great ability. Such a course would have the effect of reviving the whole of the debate which had taken place on the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Somerset. In the course of that debate, he stated the reasons which induced him to think that it was for the permanent benefit of all classes of the community, that a foundation should be laid for the complete adjustment of the Corn Laws. To that sentiment he deliberately, and on the fullest consideration, adhered; but he could not enter on the explanation of it without opening up the

whole question again. He apprehended there would be opportunities on future stages of the Bill of again discussing the general subject; and he did not think it would be for the advantage of any party to go into it at present. He must, therefore, state very generally his entire dissent from the opinion of the hon. Gentleman, that he should conciliate the support of any party by adopting the course proposed. He did not think that the agriculturists would be at all satisfied by the adoption of that course, but the contrary; nor would those who supported the measure of Her Majesty's Government, because it provided for the total repeal of the Corn Laws within a certain period, be willing to accept such a proposal as the present. As to the argument which constituted the chief ground of the hon. Member's recommendation, that he was the Minister of all classes, he was very much afraid that he should not fulfil their expectations by consenting to this Amendment. The question to which the hon. Member for Cockermouth had adverted was a very important one, and he very much desired it should not be connected with the present measure. It might be expedient; but it had obviously no particular reference to the proposal he had made on the subject of the Corn Laws. The hon. Gentleman said it would be a great advantage to a particular class, and so it might, to relieve them of their obligations; but there was another class who might not take exactly the same view, and might object to fines certain in lieu of improved value fines. At present the law gave certain facilities to those who wished to effect the conversion of their tenures; but if you could make some arrangement with the goodwill of both parties—the payer of the fines and the lord of the manor—quite irrespectively of the question of the Corn Laws, he believed it would be attended with very great advantages. A Committee was now sitting in another place to consider the subject of peculiar burdens on agriculture, which would enjoy the best assistance on legal questions; and he was of opinion that it was very desirable that their consideration should be given to this question, and a special report made by them. The hon. Gentleman must recollect that there were two parties: it would be easy to sacrifice the rights of one by simple legislation; but the proposal to effect a settlement not by voluntary arrangement, but by some sort of compulsion, required very great consideration. He had always regarded the expense and delay of transferring property as a great evil; if they looked to the state of the law in other countries, he believed they would find that in all there were greater facilities for the transfer of property than existed in this country. Such was the expense as well as delay now, from professional arrangements, unavoidably incident to the transfer, that he believed any one who had purchased a small property would be much inclined to come to the conclusion that he would never buy another. To diminish the impediments now existing to the transfer, was a point well meriting consideration; but he thought it would be very unwise to mix up this question with that of corn—a subject of great difficulty, and sufficient of itself to occupy the attention of the House.

MR. W. MILES agreed that they should throw no kind of delay in the way of passing this measure, after having fully considered and come to a decision on its principle. Amongst the different Amendments on the Paper, he could not see any in which he could concur; and a discussion on any of them would, of course, have the effect of opening the whole question of the Corn Laws. He thought, therefore, the disposition of the House would be best consulted by abstaining from unnecessary discussion. The intention of the party to which he belonged was, having discussed the subject fully and fairly, and placed their opinions before the country, to leave the country to speak for itself, when it should come to that election which they hoped was not far distant, and decide whether their view, or that of the right hon. Baronet, was the most advantageous for the country. With respect to this Amendment, he completely dissented from it, considering the principle of the existing Corn Laws as the best that had been proposed up to the present time. He wished to retain the law of 1842; and to all the Amendments he should give his decided opposition. Hitherto the varying systems of Corn Laws had entered comparatively little into the discussion; but there would be subsequent opportunities of showing that there would be such a declension of prices as would render it impossible for the present holders of the soil to maintain their position. He wished, before he sat down, to correct a misapprehension of the right hon. Baronet, with reference to a speech he had delivered on the Motion for going into Committee. The right hon. Baronet conceived that he had

stated, that, of the two propositions before the House—that of the right hon. Baronet and that of the noble Lord the Member for London, for total and immediate repeal—he should prefer acceding to the noble Lord's proposition. He had meant to state what was the opinion of the farmers generally throughout the country. He had said, that to both the proposals he should give his most decided opposition; but he added, at the same time, that, as far as the farmers were concerned, he was bound to say that, in his opinion, they would infinitely prefer the proposition of the noble Lord, and he then went on to show why. He had wished to defend his own consistency by stating his opinions, and did not mean in any way to derogate from his principles. He regarded the Resolutions as merely *pro formâ;* and he wished it to be distinctly understood in the country, that in allowing them to pass, they were decidedly opposed to each and all of them.

SIR R. PEEL: It would be most unjust to contend that, because the Resolutions were permitted to pass without a division, or the expression of much dissent, any compromise was entered into. They were necessary as the foundation of the Bill, which the hon. Gentleman said was to be contested in its future stages; and it would be impossible justly to assert that those who acquiesced in the Resolutions, had abandoned their opposition in the slightest degree. But he could not compliment the hon. Gentleman on the clearness of his explanation. The hon. Gentleman hoped he had satisfied him (Sir R. Peel) that he had not derogated from his principles, most completely; he (Sir R. Peel) had never thought so: nothing was further from his intention than to impute to the hon. Gentleman any opinion that he wished the present amount of protection to be in the slightest degree abated. On the contrary, he thought the hon. Gentleman differed from the hon. Members for Huntingdonshire and Nottinghamshire, in being unfavourable to any modification of the Corn Laws. He thought the hon. Gentleman said, if we must incur the inevitable evil of a change in the Corn Laws, then he should decidedly prefer the proposition for an immediate repeal to that proposition brought forward by the Government. The hon. Gentleman decidedly preferred the maintenance of the existing Corn Law; but, he said, on the hypothesis that something must be done, and an extensive change made, he preferred immediate to deferred repeal. That he understood to be the opinion of the hon. Gentleman; and, on referring to the usual records, he found his recollection confirmed in every particular. He had not in the slightest degree meant to impute that the hon. Gentleman derogated from his principles; but when he said, that if the noble Lord opposite would only stand to his guns he would be ready to support him, his conviction was, that he preferred immediate repeal; and the explanation now made did not interfere with that impression. The hon. Gentleman said, he would not enter into the question: neither should he; but he wished to diminish the authority of the hon. Gentleman as a prophet; and let him, therefore, remind the hon. Gentleman that, in 1842, when he proposed the diminution of the duty on the import of cattle, the hon. Gentleman predicted an enormous downfall in the price of food. The hon. Gentleman approved of the Corn Law, but objected to that part of the Tariff of 1842, which provided for the removal of prohibition on the import of cattle, saying, there would be an enormous use of barley in the fattening of cattle on the coast of Holland; and, therefore, on that ground he proposed that the duty should be taken on the weight of the cattle, in order that we might be enabled to compete with those formidable rivals. He could not help reminding the hon. Gentleman that he had prophesied, in 1842, an enormous depression in the price of stock and meat, and that up to this period his prediction had not been realized.

MR. W. MILES said, he had meant to state that the farmers would prefer the proposal of the noble Lord for immediate repeal. But he had not intended to say anything contrary to what he had always proposed; he merely gave the out-of-doors opinion. With respect to the statement of the right hon. Baronet as to the opposition he had given to the Tariff in 1842, he attributed the rise in the price of meat to the immensely increased consumption of labourers employed on railroads, as well as to the disease among the cattle. Though he might be supposed to be a false prophet, he would still tell the House, that whether they took the duty off cattle or not, they might expect an annual increase from the Continent, which would work exceedingly well, not injuring any one, so long as the demand for labour continued. But when the demand ceased, that instant the

new Tariff would become oppressive to the tenant-farmer; and foreign wheat, when it was not wanted, would come into competition with the produce of our own farmers.

MR. BURROUGHES wished to advert shortly to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Cockermouth. At a time when it would be necessary to call into operation all the productive powers of the soil, he thought it was the duty of the Government to remove every obstacle that was in the way of improvement; and he did not think that the right hon. Baronet was correct in his view of the Copyhold Enfranchisement Act, when he said that a commutation under that Act converted a fine certain into a fine arbitrary. He spoke with diffidence; but his opinion was, that upon the enfranchisement of copyhold land, under that Act, which was effected by the payment of so many years' purchase, as the case might be, no fine remained, and the tenure was altogether changed. That appeared to him to be an analogy between the mode in which the Highway Act was about to be dealt with, and the mode in which he would have the Copyhold Enfranchisement Act dealt with. And he could assure the right hon. Baronet he did not think a compulsory clause in the Copyhold Act would be half so unpopular as the compulsory clause which was about to be added, for the appointment of district surveyors, in the Highway Act. He wished to be understood as approving that intention, however unpopular it might be. He thought the appointment of district surveyors desirable; but what was the state of the law now with regard to copyholds? There was an Act for the voluntary enfranchisement of copyholds; well, what was the consequence?—a copyright tenant complained that the fine was too high, and that the fees were forty times worse. The tenant would state that there was now a Copyhold Enfranchisement Act, under which proceedings were voluntary, certainly, but it would, in all probability, before long, be made compulsory. The value would be calculated upon the fines of preceding years; and so, he doubted not, on that since the passing of that Act, fines had been higher than before; and he knew that, like the district surveyors' clause in the Highway Act, the Act for the voluntary enfranchisement of copyholds had been almost a dead letter. The right hon. Baronet had said, that the purchase of small estates was much checked on account of the expense. Now, nothing increased that expense more than copyhold tenure; but there was a compulsory sale of small portions of an estate, to which parties were obliged to submit—he alluded to the compulsory sale of those pieces of land which were taken for railroads. He had superintended for himself and others the sale of several small portions of estates to railroad companies, and the trouble and expense of defining the copyholds was very great. He would not trouble the House at any greater length on the present occasion; but the subject having been mentioned, he did not like to remain entirely silent.

MR. HUME thought few measures would tend more to the development of the productive powers of the soil than making the enfranchisement of copyholds compulsory. The more our tenures were simplified the better. He hoped measures would be adopted to carry out the recommendations of their own Committee on the subject.

SIR A. BROOKE would, at that stage of the proceedings, address some observations to the House, explanatory of his reasons in giving his opposition to the measure introduced by Her Majesty's Government. He would principally confine himself to the operation of the measure as regarded Ireland; for however the interests of England might be involved, he maintained it would ten times more affect Ireland. It appeared to him very extraordinary that, during the whole of the debate, there was so little said as to the effects the measure might produce on Ireland. And of all the Irish Members who voted in favour of the Bill, only two attempted to justify that vote; and of those two, one was the follower of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. O'Connell), while all of them assumed to themselves the exclusive privilege of watching over the particular interests of the poorer classes of Ireland. None of those Irish Members had good reason for the course they had taken — a course in opposition to their former sentiments and votes. Some reason ought to have been given for a change of conduct so extraordinary; for had there been any reasons adduced throughout the debate which were calculated to satisfy his own mind as to the propriety or the necessity of the measure before the House, or that it would tend, even in a comparative degree, to benefit the condition of the lower classes of the people of Ireland, it should have his cordial support. In considering the measure with reference to

Ireland, it struck him that it should be considered on its own intrinsic merits, and particularly as to its effects on Ireland. Every Gentleman present must be aware that in England a great mass of the population was almost exclusively dependent on manufactures for support; that was not the case in Ireland. There, few, comparatively speaking, derived support from such a source; and even those parties in Ireland who carried on factories, were themselves in a great measure dependent on the land to carry on their business; for instance, those who were extensively engaged in the linen trade were generally landed proprietors; they had large farms which they cultivated. And those labourers who were employed in manufactures, when their business became at all slack, had recourse to agricultural labour for the support of themselves and their families; with the exception of some artisans, masons, and carpenters, and even those could hardly be excepted, as in country places they had small farms to assist in the support of themselves and their household, so that he might fairly conclude that in Ireland all classes were dependent on the land. It was also evident that England was an importing country, while Ireland was an exporting country. The exports of Ireland to England, during the last year, in wheat, in barley, oatmeal, flour, and other articles of trade, amounted to nearly 5,000,000*l.* of money. He would ask, would it be to the advantage of this country that that vast sum should be transferred to America or to other countries? Would it be to the advantage of Ireland to have an amount of 5,000,000*l.* sent to foreign countries? He knew the reply would be made that it would be much better for the people of Ireland to consume their own productions; but the means to do so should be first acquired, which to some would be a difficult matter, as three-fourths of the population were a great portion of the year without any employment. One of the first things which should be considered as regarded Ireland was, to provide the people with employment, and which he would recommend to the immediate attention of Her Majesty's Government. He was one of a deputation who waited on the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government to press on him the necessity of the construction of a canal from Lough Erne to Ballyshannon, which would afford employment to the poorer classes in that large district. The reply of the right hon. Baronet was, that it would be more consistent for the landed proprietors to undertake the work. He would say that the landed proprietors were perfectly willing to assist to the utmost of their power, if the Government would give that encouragement which they ought, and which the circumstances of Ireland now imperatively demanded. It was, however, with regret he had to state to the House that there was not the slightest hope of any great benefit being conferred on Ireland, unless there was some security for peace, for tranquillity, and for security to life and property. As long as the present system of agitation continued, it would be impossible for anything to go on in Ireland either prosperously or happily. He regretted very much the absence of the hon. Member for Cork, as he wished to refer to a letter which was addressed by that hon. Member to the Conciliation Hall, Dublin, relative to the Bill which was now before the other House; and which would prove the little hope there was to benefit Ireland, while letters of such a description were addressed and circulated in that county. In the letter of the hon. Member for Cork he found the following passages, well calculated to keep Ireland in a state of excitement:—

"I am now anxious that the Association should distinctly understand the position we are placed in. The Association is most anxious to have the country free from the horrors of the wholesale murders of the clearance system, and of the often retaliatory and hideous assassinations. The Coercion Bill does not even purport to give any remedy for the crimes of the landlords; and it is more likely to provoke additional assassination than to check the progress of crime, or bring to punishment those who are already stained with the guilt of perpetrating those crimes."

Here there was, at least by implication, a charge against the landlords of Ireland, as if they were murderers; while, to speak the truth, there could not be taken, as a class, a more indulgent or a more useful body of men. The right hon. Baronet alluded to the potato disease. He would be sorry to damp the ardour or the zeal of Her Majesty's Government to provide against any contingency which might arise in Ireland; but still he was convinced that the accounts which the right hon. Baronet had received on the subject of the potato disease were greatly exaggerated. There might be in some districts a defalcation as to the potato crop, but there was in the country an abundance of corn. From a consideration of the whole subject, he felt himself compelled to oppose the measure introduced by the Government, because it would prove

prejudicial to the best interests of Ireland, and retard every agricultural improvement.

MR. ACLAND would not enter into the question, but he wished to say that he was one of those who had been exposed to considerable odium for refusing to pledge himself to a course which was most impolitic. If they were going to suffer they had to thank those who had made unreasonable demands; and he had refused to pledge himself to the unreasonable proposition of not being content with less protection than they then possessed. He had not given his vote the other night without much consideration of the course he was taking.

MR. STAFFORD O'BRIEN would second the request to his hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract not to divide the House on this Amendment. His hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire had said that all who voted against the proposition of the Government had pledged themselves to maintain the existing Corn Laws. Now, he thought he should speak for himself; and he begged to say that he expressed no opinion of the kind on that subject. He found a proposition of the Government before the House on this subject —he felt it his duty to oppose that proposition—and he should do so without stating what were the particular views he entertained on the maintenance or surrender of protection. He had seen enough of the process of *Hansardizing* going on in that House to know it was very disagreeable to be a *Hansardee*, and, therefore, he would not subject himself to it. All he would say, therefore, was, that he saw a Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws on the Table, that he objected to that Bill, and that he meant to vote against it.

MR. C. BULLER said, as the hon. Gentleman and his Friends were united, he presumed they were united for some purpose or other; and as they objected to the Motion for an alteration of the Corn Laws, it was but a fair inference that they were united in favour of the existing Corn Laws.

MR. BORTHWICK: Under the existing circumstances of the country, the measure proposed by her Majesty's Government was totally uncalled for; indeed, any measure on the subject of the Corn Laws was at present uncalled for, and unnecessary. Nor could he take into his favourable consideration any amendment which would imply any alteration in the Corn Laws at this time. He was, however, far from saying that circumstances would not arise which might require a change; but those circumstances had not yet arisen. He agreed in opinion with that great philosopher, Lord Bacon, who declared that changes should never be made unless there would be a sufficient amount of good to counterbalance any evil which might result from the change. The present Corn Laws had worked extremely well; and it was most desirable that the present protection, which the present circumstances of the country imperatively demanded, should be continued.

MR. WARD said, he had hitherto looked upon the right hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. S. O'Brien) as the pink of consistency, the very mirror of agricultural chivalry. He was therefore astonished to hear the hon. Member, the Chairman of the Publication Committee of the Protection Society in Old Bond-street, who were pledged never, under any conceivable circumstances, to adopt any measure by which the agricultural interest would receive less than their present amount of protection—he was astonished to hear that hon. Member come forward with such a *Mysteries-of-Udolpho* sort of speech, and concede that he might be hereafter ready to adopt some such measure as this, or at least a modification of the present Corn Laws. Henceforward he should not know in whom to put faith. He had once the greatest reliance on the hon. Member; but he was obliged to confess with the greatest pain and regret that he could now place no more confidence in him (Mr. S. O'Brien), that on any other person on that side of the House. His confidence in them was reduced so low he could go no further.

MR. HUDSON would assure the House that, in his own neighbourhood, numbers of small proprietors, who had in their occupancy one hundred acres of land and upwards, found it very difficult, under all the advantages which the present law afforded, to maintain their position. He would ask what must their situation then be when the proposed measure would come into operation? If it became law it was his firm conviction, and the conviction of the landed interest in his county (Yorkshire), whether Whig or Tory, that certain ruin would be the result. With reference to the subject alluded to by the hon. Member for Cockermouth, and spoken of by the First Lord of the Treasury, he thought that to enfranchise copyholds by a compulsory law would be to do an act of injustice to the lords of the ma-

nors, and to commit a wholesale system of robbery.

Mr. S. O'BRIEN was sorry to find that the hon. Member for Sheffield had so little confidence in the Members of his (Mr. O'Brien's) side of the House, but he was happy to observe from the manner of the hon. Gentleman, that his confidence in himself was not at all diminished; and he desired further to remark, that when he (Mr. O'Brien) should enter into a statement of his reasons for opposing the measure, it would be for the gratification of those persons who had a better right to question him upon the subject than the hon. Gentleman.

Lord G. BENTINCK would not make any apology for the few observations he was about to address to the House. He could assure the hon. Member for Sheffield that there was no "shaking" on that side of the House, in their determination of upholding the interests of agriculture, and the other branches of domestic industry. He did not mean to say that the present system of protection was to remain permanent for all time and under all circumstances. If, for example, his hon. Friend the Secretary for the Home Department were to come down to the House, and fulfil all the promises and recommendations he made to the country in 1826, and offer full compensation to agricultural interests; if he were to come down on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers, and propose to deduct 30 per cent of all payments out of the Exchequer for that purpose, commencing with the Civil List, and going through all the annuitants on the public purse, and when he had got a reduction of 15,000,000*l.* from the burdens of the people, and the greater portion of that amount was to be paid to the relief of agriculturists—they would not be so unreasonable as to say that they were not then in a condition to compete with any people in the world. Let them relieve agriculturists from the payment of tithes, from the payment of poor rates, from the payment of the malt tax, from the payment of the duty on home-distilled spirits, and from the payment of the hop duty, and they would defy every nation in the world in their agriculture; and no man would be so unreasonable then as to ask for protection, as they would be able to compete with any country. It was really impossible for him to say what proposition might not emanate from Her Majesty's Ministers: he was always in expectation of hearing something new. He could assure the hon. Member for Sheffield, therefore, that they were not bound under every circumstance to ask for the same amount of protection as they then had, if those views of Her Majesty's Ministers were carried out, which they had been induced to expect from the statement of the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Mr. M. MILNES considered what had fallen from the hon. Member for Cockermouth had as much to do with the question under discussion as if he had delivered a dissertation on the state of New Zealand. He would not, after the House had listened to what had been said by the several Members who had addressed the House, ask them to retrace their steps for the last few hours, and go back to what he had laid before them. He still believed that he did right in making the proposition, not concurring in the opinions of hon. Members who had referred to it; and notwithstanding his own impression as to the advantage it would be to the public, he would withdraw his Motion, at the same time expressing his hope that at a future time he should have an opportunity of again bringing it under the consideration of the House, when it would be more favourably received.

Motion withdrawn.

Question again put.

Mr. P. HOWARD said, he had placed on the Order-book a Motion in reference to the question which had so long occupied the attention of the House. It was to give to their Colonies and Canada time to prepare for the great change that was proposed in reference to the Corn Laws, as he knew that they could not keep pace with the rapidity of the alterations, and would be unable to compete with the United States. He also considered, in reference to the farmers of this country, that existing contracts should regulate the councils of great nations. With regard to tenants-at-will, it was not necessary to come to any arrangement; but with leaseholders it was very different, and by withdrawing protection from them, they would inflict upon them a very great injury; yet his wish was not to interfere further than would merely protect existing rights. As hon. Gentlemen who had preceded him, had considered it advisable to withdraw their Motions, it was probable he should follow their example. He saw many reasons for an immediate cessation of the existing protective duties, in order to meet

the wants of the Irish people, and he was anxious to see the question of the Corn Laws settled, because if they should have to contend against the great transatlantic republic, it would be desirable that they should have peace amongst themselves. He considered that there was nothing in the change proposed by the right hon. Baronet which was at all unconstitutional, as an alteration in the Corn Laws would be merely an administrative measure. The hon. Member concluded by withdrawing a Motion of which he had given notice to extend the period of protection to February 1, 1851.

SIR W. JOLLIFFE was of opinion, that the proposition of the Government would have an injurious effect upon the country. He did not agree with the opinions expressed by the hon. Member, that the proposed Bill would give any security that protection should exist for the term of three years; for in case corn should rise to "famine prices," he did not believe that the right hon. Baronet would retain even the 4*s.* duty; and that was an opinion in which the hon. and gallant Officer (Colonel Wood) who supported the views of the right hon. Baronet fully coincided. Should the right hon. Baronet remain in office for three months, which he considered would be the extent of it, they had no security by the proposed Bill, that he would not in that time propose an entire removal of protection; and if he did not do so, but went out of office, and the noble Lord the Member for the city of London should succeed him, could that noble Lord be upbraided for proposing an immediate repeal of those duties of which he had expressed his disapproval? When he looked at the state of that House, and considered the probability of the measure being again brought under discussion for an alteration of the Bill then before them, he thought it would be much better to have it repealed at once.

MR. ALDERMAN COPELAND expressed his hearty concurrence in the measure of the right hon. Baronet, but thought that it would have been more complete if the repeal of the Corn Laws had been total and immediate; for the effect of its being only gradual would be to keep the farmers of the country, for the next three years, in a state of uncertainty and agitation. Till this question was settled by a total abolition of duty, it would never be settled; but it would be annually discussed. He was last Monday in the county of Hants, at Winchester, and he asked several farmers what they thought of the Government majority; and nine out of ten, although they expressed themselves surprised, declared that they would prefer an immediate abolition of duty to its retention for three years. In this discussion it had been asked what was to become of the tenant-farmers? He would give an answer from his own experience. He was joint-treasurer to a charitable corporation, and pending the present proposition, one of the large farms belonging to it became vacant; they did not wish to continue their tenant, and applications for the farm were innumerable. They were at a loss to choose. One of their other tenants from Essex, who had been on a farm for some years, which he had brought to great perfection, applied for this, and he was asked 1,400*l.* a year rent, instead of 1,200*l.*, at which it had before been let. He went into Yorkshire, returned, and took the lease; and to-day he (Alderman Copeland) had settled the terms of his lease, and he had taken the farm. [SIR J. GRAHAM: For how many years?] For fourteen years and a half. It might, perhaps, be said, the farm was underlet; but all he could say was, that the late tenant had not been successful; and when he saw a man take a farm of 900 acres at 1,400*l.* a-year, and go into it with a capital of 20,000*l.*, he was convinced that the tenant-farmers had no fear of the Bill of the right hon. Baronet. These were circumstances which weighed with him as a commercial man, and told more forcibly on the opinion he had formed of the project of the Government than any arguments he could hear.

MR. FINCH would meet one case with another. He knew a farmer in the same county, Essex, who, not long since, in answer to his landlord, who was a free-trader, and who attempted to persuade him that, as the shackles of trade were about to be removed, he ought to take a new lease, said that, but for the capital he had already sunk in the farm, nothing would induce him to take a lease at the same rent, foreseeing the injurious effect which the removal of protection would have upon agriculture. The circumstances which might have induced the farmer to whom the hon. Gentleman alluded, to increase his rent were twofold: first, the land might have been greatly enhanced in value; secondly, the farmer might have been sanguine that the Government measure would have been

thrown out in the House of Lords, as a great many other agriculturists were.

Lord G. BENTINCK said: Sir, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, whether or no he has made up his mind as to what will be the probable operation of the Bill which he has introduced? I think that when the right hon. Baronet introduced the measure, he said he was unable to form any calculation as to its effects upon the price of home-grown corn. He then said, he had made no calculation whatever. A considerable time has since elapsed; and it surely must have struck the right hon. Baronet that the country is most anxious for the solution of the question, and to hear the opinion of Government upon the subject. I cannot avoid saying, Sir, that I think the right hon. Gentleman is bound to tell the country what his opinion is—what he calculates will be the practical effects of the changes. So short a time ago, Sir, as the 10th of June last, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department predicted, with the greatest confidence, that if the total repeal of the Corn Laws took place, the average price of wheat could not exceed 45*s.* per quarter. I think my right hon. Friend at the same time predicted, that if such would be the case, that all the most ancient land of England would be thrown out of cultivation. I wish to know whether anything has transpired since the 10th of June, to alter the opinion of my right hon. Friend as to the probable price of wheat in case this Bill is passed? I further wish to know what the right hon. Baronet proposes should be done with respect to the commutation of tithe. I think my right hon. Friend on a previous occasion said, he wanted time to consider what would be the effect of the alteration caused by the measure as regards tithe; but in June last, my right hon. Friend (Sir J. Graham) showed that the revenue of "the most ancient land in England" would be almost entirely eaten up by the tithe if the Corn Laws were to be repealed. I want to know, Sir, whether the right hon. Baronet still thinks such will be the effect of this measure on these lands? My right hon. Friend was, I repeat, Sir, of opinion, at the time to which I refer, that a repeal of the Corn Law would drive most of the ancient land in England out of cultivation and into pasture; and my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government also expressed his opinion in 1841, that no higher protection than a duty of 1*s.* per bushel would have the effect of entirely paralysing agriculture, and would be no protection at all to Ireland. Since the introduction of the measure, the right hon. Gentlemen have had time to consider what its probable effects would be; and I say again, Sir, that the country is entitled to hear the opinions of the Government on the subject. When the right hon. Baronet introduced the measure which is now law, he informed the landed interest what his expectations were as to the prices of wheat. He said he thought the price of wheat would average 56*s.* per quarter, and would range between 54*s.* and 58*s.* My right hon. Friend then estimated what the protection was to be which would give such an average price. The right hon. Gentleman then, at all events, considered that a considerable protective duty was necessary in order to keep the price of wheat at 56*s.* At that time, when the right hon. Baronet expected the price of wheat to be 56*s.* a quarter, he calculated that foreign corn would be sent in at 40*s.* The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War, in his address to his constituents on the 13th of February, 1845, stated, that it had been his opinion that a duty of 20*s.* was more than sufficient protection; but then he admitted that subsequent experience had taught him that 20*s.* duty was not one penny too much protection. I believe I am perfectly correct in making this statement, and that the right hon. Gentleman then said that a duty of 20*s.* ought to be kept up. I ask that right hon. Gentleman, as well as the right hon. Gentlemen the First Lord of the Treasury and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any new circumstances have occurred within the last twelve months which can lead them to the conclusion that the price at which foreign corn can be introduced to this country would be anything less than from 40*s.* to 45*s.* per quarter? I repeat again, Sir, that it is but proper Government should give an opinion, for which the country is so anxious, upon what the effect of the measure will be, according to the opinion which, doubtless, they must have formed before this period. I distinctly ask the right hon. Baronet whether or no he has made up his mind as to what the effect of this law will be, and what that opinion is?

Sir R. PEEL: I think my noble Friend will see that I could not answer his question as to the price of wheat under the proposed measure, or its effect upon the tithe-

payer or the titheowner. I believe it is understood that we are not to revive that discussion, which it was the general wish of the House should be postponed till the second reading of the Bill. I am sure the noble Lord cannot have failed to have paid the same attention to my speech which I paid to his; and I assure my noble Friend I listened to that speech, which he delivered with much ability, with great satisfaction, whatever might be the observations it contained with regard to myself. In what I addressed to the House, I endeavoured to show two things; I endeavoured to show that there were causes in operation tending to diminish the cost of the production of corn, and which for several years had diminished the price of wheat; and I attempted to show that there had been within the last three years more agricultural improvement, and more application of science to the production of corn, than at any former period. I was charged with hastiness in disturbing this happy state of circumstances. Now, during the last three years, when you admit there was a greater amount of agricultural improvement than at any other period, the price of wheat has only been 51*s.* I attempted to show that there were causes at work, extrinsically of the operation of the Corn Laws, which had a tendency to diminish the price of wheat. I then attempted to show that agricultural prosperity was not necessarily interwoven with the price of wheat, because on the average of several years previous to 1842, the price of wheat had been 67*s.* per quarter; yet during the three years admitted to have been years of great agricultural improvement, the price had been only 51*s.* I thought that a very strong proof that the prosperity of agriculture does not necessarily depend on the price of wheat. Now, I admit to my noble Friend, I have no answer to make to him if he quotes *Hansard;* I admit to him if he searches through *Hansard,* he can find observations and speeches at variance with what I stated the other night. I began by simply stating, that after a close investigation into the question, I was ready to submit to the charge of inconsistency. I stated in the strongest manner that I did not want to be referred to speeches delivered at a former period, to know that my opinions had undergone a change; I said I did not wish to deprive those who had always advocated a repeal of the Corn Laws, of the full and entire credit due to them; and I must remind my noble Friend, that when the Motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. Villiers) was brought forward last year, I made a speech which Earl Grey described as a conclusive speech in favour of a gradual repeal of the Corn Laws. As to the effect of the present measure with respect to tithe, I am unwilling to enter into that part of the subject. I have already stated I would fix any day that may be most convenient for the discussion on the second reading. I do not wish to throw any difficulty in the way of that discussion. I am ready to name any day, at a reasonably early period, for taking the second reading. The arrangement I propose is this —that the Report on the Resolutions should be brought up and received on Monday, and the Bill then brought in and read a first time; as the debate on the second reading is likely to be a protracted one, it might be inconvenient to begin it on the Friday; and I, therefore, propose that the debate on the second reading shall be taken on Monday week. This being the arrangement, I think it better to postpone any observations I may have to make till that debate; I could not merely answer the questions my noble Friend has put, and, therefore, I think it better to postpone my observations till that opportunity. As to the price of corn, if, as he says, I endeavoured by the Corn Law to give a guarantee that it should keep at a certain price, I could have attempted nothing so unwise. Under a higher rate of protection than that given by the Act of 1842, the price of corn was very much lower than subsequent to it; I believe in 1835 the price of wheat was as low as 35*s.*; during the whole of that year the average price of wheat did not exceed 39*s.* I think that subsequent to the passing of the present law, the price has been 41*s.*, 42*s.*, and not under 40*s.*, on the average of years. And among other considerations that induced me to change my opinion was, seeing that legislative enactments, even where the protection given by them was higher than that given by the present law, have entirely failed in securing a high price of wheat; if with the higher rate of protection the price has been as low as 39*s.*, should it, the year after the present change, fall to 39*s.* again, the low price cannot be necessarily imputed to the meditated alteration in the law; because under a high protection we have failed for a whole year in securing to the agricultural interest a higher price than 40*s.* I do not think the prosperity of agriculture depends upon the price of wheat.

I know a case in which eleven farms in the county of Roxburgh have been let since the proposal of the present alteration in the Corn Law; the valuation was made in October last, under the assumption that the present Corn Laws would be continued, and yet the whole eleven farms have been let at higher rents: this has occurred within the last fortnight. I believe also that five farms in the county of Lincoln, which had become vacant, have been relet since the intentions of Her Majesty's Government were made known; and in the case of each of these five farms an increased rent has been received. These facts confirm my impression that the prosperity of agriculture is not necessarily interwoven with the price of wheat.

Mr. DISRAELI: I have no intention of trespassing on the House, but I feel bound to say that the right hon. Baronet has not answered the inquiry of my noble Friend. My noble Friend inquired whether the right hon. Baronet had, during the last six weeks, formed any opinion as to what extent the measure would affect the price of agricultural produce, and what the probable price of corn would be under the proposed measure? What my noble Friend said as to the opinions of Members of the Government three years ago, the right hon. Baronet has likewise passed over. I do not wish to enter into the general question. After what has fallen from the right hon. Baronet, it would be neither becoming nor courteous to do so, until the second reading of the Bill; but I cannot avoid saying that I think the inquiry of my noble Frind a perfectly fair and legitimate one. I think my noble Friend has a right to ask if the Government has not, during the six weeks which has intervened since the introduction of the measure, formed an opinion as to how it will affect the price of agricultural produce. If the Government have not formed an opinion, we will accept that reply at the value which we choose to place upon it—it may guide our future conduct, and the opinion of the country. The inquiry does not trench on the general merits of the question; within these limits my noble Friend has confined himself; he has not received an answer, though I must say I think he was entitled to it. After what has fallen from the right hon. Baronet, it would be unbecoming to press on him any general considerations. I am glad to congratulate the House on their deliverance from a great evil; and that henceforth there are to be no more quotations from *Hansard*. I am glad myself that after this night *Hansard* is to be no longer recognised as an official authority.

Sir R. PEEL: The hon. Gentleman asked me for an answer which I had already given. I stated that it would be utterly impossible for me to estimate what the price of wheat would be whatever the state of the law was—that it is influenced by other circumstances. I cannot enter further into the question.

Mr. FINCH regretted that a more satisfactory answer had not been given by the right hon. Gentleman. Every body knew that the price of wheat varied with the seasons and other circumstances; but the right hon. Gentleman might state what average he expected. When you took away a duty varying from 1*s.* to 20*s.*, could you say that it would not have an effect on the price of wheat? The responsibility of this measure must fall on those hon. Gentlemen who, in and out of the House, had placed their confidence in the Ministry; and they who could confide in their wisdom and discretion were bound to transfer their confidence to the Anti-Corn-Law League. He should have thought that the First Minister of the Crown, when he introduced a measure to affect one half the population of the United Kingdom, would have been enabled to give a satisfactory reply. How was it possible that landlords could enter into any stipulation with their tenants which could be satisfactory? Nobody could give an answer, and say what was to be the price of wheat three years hence. He asked, then, the hon. Member for Stockport, had he formed any calculation?

Lord G. BENTINCK: My right hon. Friend has not answered my question. I did not ask the right hon. Baronet to protect us from the influence of seasons, but a simple question, to which I think I have a right, on behalf of the country, to demand an answer before we go into the second reading. We have a right to know what the right hon. Gentleman estimates will be the difference, occasioned by the removal of protection as it now exists in the price of corn. I say again, the country has a right to know what the opinion of the First Minister of the Crown is on so important a subject—what difference the removal of protection will make in the price of corn. Let my right hon. Friend select any year—that year to which he adverted, 1836—when the average price of corn was 39*s.* a quarter—whether on such a year as that the price of wheat

would, by the removal of protection, be lowered 5*s*., 10*s*., or 15*s*., or taking the price of wheat at 56*s*., as it had been during other years, whether he thought that with no protection it will be 51*s*., or 46*s*., or 43*s*.—what, in short, he expects the price of corn will be under the proposed law? The right hon. Gentleman had answered such a question in 1842; nay, he had volunteered an answer; and it has been usually the practice of all Ministers in introducing changes, to tell the country what was likely to be the practical operation of those changes.

Sir R. PEEL: It is because of my courage in 1842 that I hesitate now. But it is not that I ever gave a guarantee that the prices of corn would vary from 54*s*. to 58*s*. If my noble Friend will refer once again to *Hansard*, he will find that I distinctly stated it was utterly impossible, in my opinion, for any act of a Legislature to guarantee prices. I then distinctly refused to give any guarantee whatever. I stated that although I thought it probable there would be a variation from 54*s*. to 58*s*., yet that various other considerations besides the acts of a Legislature affected prices. My noble Friend refers to a case of corn being at 39*s*. under a high state of protection. Now, after mature reflection on this subject, I am not at all clear that, if protection had been withdrawn, even at that period, the price of corn would have been lower than 39*s*. I think it is highly probable that the exclusion of corn, and of a regular trade in corn, there being a high protection, did lead, under a succession of favourable harvests, to lower prices in this country more so than if for some years preceding there had been less protection. I am bound to state to my noble Friend that there are great difficulties in making a calculation of this kind. I am not prepared to admit that, if there had been a much diminished protection, or no protection at all, there would have been a lower average price for the year 1835 than 39*s*. But, as I said before, it is very difficult to make any accurate calculation.

Mr. C. P. VILLIERS thought that, as hon. Gentlemen opposite turned to that (the Opposition) side of the House as if they deemed all the responsibility of the repeal of the Corn Laws was there to be attached, it was only fair that they should learn what was the view there taken of the probable effect of the withdrawal of protection. The answer might be illustrated by an analogous case. A person who had been persecuted with the solicitations of a beggar for alms, at last gave some money, and in doing so, he asked the mendicant what he would have done if his entreaties had been refused? The reply was, "Why, I should have been obliged to work." Now, the hon. Gentleman asked what would become of him if protection was withdrawn? All he could say was, that if he went and looked over his own property himself, and cultivated it better than he hitherto had done, he would, perhaps, become a better and a happier man.

Colonel SIBTHORP ventured on two or three occasions to express his astonishment at the position of the present Government — a Government which was once strong in every way, not only as regarded their own individual position, but also strong in the aid they received from their late supporters. He had taken the liberty to put some questions to the right hon. Baronet on former occasions. He asked, where were certain Members of that Government? he asked why were they not in that House? He received no answer; the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government was silent, and so also was the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department. Perhaps they delayed their answers waiting for precedents; perhaps they thought there were no precedents on the subject. But he was not without a precedent, and he could refer to Parliamentary records for the accuracy of which he might vouch: they were records to which the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, as well as the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, had themselves referred. He put questions to know where were certain Members of Her Majesty's Government who were always esteemed important men in that House? He now repeated the question, why certain Members of the Government were not present in the House? Where was the Secretary for the Colonies? Where was the Secretary for Ireland? Where were the Irish Attorney and Solicitor Generals? And where were two Lords of the Treasury? [An Hon. Member: A new writ has been moved for one of the Lords of the Treasury to-night.] There was one still vacant; but *ubi mel, ibi apes*. For his precedent he found in one of the records of Parliament that a question was put by a noble Lord, a protectionist, the Earl of Darlington (now the Duke of Cleveland) in that House, on the 22nd of May, 1835:—

"Lord Darlington said, I wish to ask the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Lord Palmerston is to be created a Member of the British Peerage, and thereby obtain a seat in the other House of Parliament? Or, whether any vacancy is likely to occur in this House, so as to enable him to procure a seat here? The public know nothing upon the subject, except that Lord Palmerston has been gazetted as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and it is highly important that the fact should be understood."

So he thought with respect to the present instances to which his question had reference. Lord Darlington added—

"If the noble Lord answer in the negative, I wish to ask, whether it be intended that the noble Lord should continue to hold the situation as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? I believe it is perfectly unusual, and almost unprecedented, for an individual not in Parliament to hold a Cabinet situation."

So, indeed, it was. [Sir ROBERT PEEL: I was not asked that question.] No; nor would the right hon. Baronet have answered it. The answer was given by the noble Lord then the Home Secretary, now the Member for the city of London, who said—

"The noble Lord has asked me several questions, all of them of rather an extraordinary and novel nature. One is, whether it is the intention of the Crown to confer the dignity of the Peerage upon a certain individual? Next, whether it is the intention of any Member of this House to vacate his seat for that individual, or, as my right hon. Friend suggests, to vacate in that individual's favour by dying himself? The question then arises, whether, in that case, any particular body of constituents would be disposed to elect the noble Lord, who has been referred to, as their representative in this House, or whether they would choose some other representative? There then arises a fourth question, or a fifth, whether, supposing none of those things to happen, it is intended that Lord Palmerston shall then continue Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? Really these questions are of so extraordinary and novel nature, that I can only entreat the noble Lord to bring forward a distinct Motion on the subject."

Lord Darlington was then reported to have said—

"Perhaps the noble Lord will allow me to ask him another question? The noble Lord talks of novelty; is it novel or is it not for an individual holding the office of Foreign Secretary to have no seat either in this or the other House of Parliament?"

Now he thought he might put the question in the same form touching the present Secretary for the Colonies, and the present Secretary for Ireland. To the latter question Lord John Russell, with that *suaviter in modo* which characterizes the noble Lord, replied thus:—

"I can only say that if the state of things of which the noble Lord complains had continued for any length of time, these might be very proper questions; but as the absence of Lord Palmerston is merely a temporary one, I must decline giving any other answer than that I have already returned to the noble Lord."

Now, as to the length of time he (Colonel Sibthorp) should wish to be informed how much longer the present Secretary for the Colonies was to be *non est inventus*, and how much longer the Secretary for Ireland would remain absent for want of a seat in that House. He wanted to know when there was a chance of those two Gentlemen, who filled important situations in the Government of the country, appearing in that House. For himself, he thought the chance became every day less. The people of this country did not like tergiversation; and the more the conduct of the Government was exposed to the public, the less likely would be rendered the presence of those Gentlemen in that House. Formerly, he never put a question to the right hon. Gentleman, or to any Member of the Government, that he did not get a straightforward answer, which he hoped, as an humble Member, he was entitled to. If the right hon. Gentleman's conduct had been straightforward, then he (Colonel Sibthorp) had practised a very crooked course during the whole of his life. He had, during his twenty-two years' residence in this House, scorned to act a servile part to any one; and when he found a man profess one thing and perform another, it became him (Colonel Sibthorp) as an honest man to say—"The Lord deliver me from such company!"

SIR R. PEEL could not help remarking that the hon. and gallant Officer always forgot when he rose to ask a question, before closing his speech, to put the question. With respect to the offices to which the hon. and gallant Member referred, that of the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests had been filled up by the appointment of Viscount Canning; and the other office, that of one of the Lords of the Treasury, would be filled up by Monday next. These were the answers to the first inquiries of the hon. and gallant Officer; but if he further insisted upon an answer to his question as to when the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Secretary for Ireland would obtain seats in that House, he must honestly confess that he could not give the hon. and gallant Member any positive answer. He would only remark that if the hon. and gallant Officer should think proper to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, he could assure him that his noble Friend (the Earl

of Lincoln) would be quite prepared to encounter him in his own city.

COLONEL SIBTHORP said, that with regard to accepting the Chiltern Hundreds, he believed that was an office for which application must be made to Government. Then he never would make that application. He would never disgrace himself so far; but he would tell the right hon. Baronet this, that if he would dissolve Parliament, he cared not even if the right hon. Baronet were himself to come to Lincoln, and with all the expectations that he might hold out to the citizens of Lincoln, he (Colonel Sibthorp) was quite prepared to meet him. He never bribed any man. He had no Treasury seats to offer; he had nothing but his own conduct—his principles and consistency to rely on. But with all this disadvantage he would invite the right hon. Baronet to the contest. Let him dissolve Parliament to-morrow, and send whom he liked, he would try a contest for the city of Lincoln, which he had had the honour of representing for twenty years, and his ancestors before him for a century and a half. With the support he could command, he would set the right hon. Baronet at defiance. There should be no tricks, no Anti-Corn-Law League manœuvres. He defied the right hon. Gentleman. He would stand upon his own character, his own consistency, his own conduct. Let the Anti-Corn-Law League men—let the Secretary for Ireland try; he would meet them, and would see whether they would dare offer such an insult to the citizens of Lincoln. He relied upon their consistency, and their Conservative principles.

MR. DISRAELI considered that it was clearly the duty of the House to inquire whether the First Minister, who had recommended this measure, took the responsibility of passing it through the two Houses of Parliament. The gallant Officer had referred to some circumstances which occurred in 1835, and which were of great notoriety. He did not suppose the noble Lord, who was connected with those circumstances, could deny their accuracy. He would recall to the right hon. Gentleman a precedent with respect to this question, which he thought would be entitled to a more direct answer than that which he had given to the question of the gallant Officer. When the Master General of the Ordnance, Sir George Murray, was deprived of his seat in that House, the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) rose and asked whether the gallant Officer, the Master of the Ordnance, still attended the Cabinet Councils? If he (Mr. Disraeli) recollected aright, the right hon. Gentleman rose and said that his right hon. and gallant Friend had ceased to attend the Cabinet Councils. In his (Mr. Disraeli's) opinion, that answer recognised a great constitutional principle; and he could not understand why the House of Commons should lose sight of that principle. Therefore he begged leave to ask, with great respect to the right hon. Gentleman, whether the Secretary of State of the Colonies, who did not occupy a seat in the House of Commons, was still in the habit of attending Cabinet Councils?

SIR R. PEEL said, that he believed there had been no Cabinet Council held since his right hon. Friend Mr. Gladstone had been appointed Secretary to the Colonies, which he had not attended. His right hon. Friend was a Member of the Cabinet, and attended the Cabinet Councils, although he was not a Member of that House.

MR. DISRAELI understood, then, the right hon. Baronet to say that he approved of Mr. Gladstone being a Member of, and attending Cabinet Councils, although, in the year 1835, the right hon. Baronet did not approve of Sir George Murray attending those Councils, he not being at the time a Member of the House of Commons.

SIR R. PEEL did not recollect under what circumstances Sir G. Murray, at the time the hon. Gentleman referred to, did not attend the Cabinet Councils, nor did he recollect that the reason he (Sir R. Peel) assigned for the right hon. and gallant Officer not attending those Councils was that he was not a Member of Parliament. Until he referred to the Parliamentary records, he could not speak upon the subject.

VISCOUNT POLLINGTON said, that as the right hon. Baronet had invited the hon. and gallant Colonel the Member for the city of Lincoln to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, that he might afford an opportunity of a contest on the part of Lord Lincoln, he (Lord Pollington) as a voter for the county of Nottingham would ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he was not satisfied with the defeat which the noble Lord had already experienced?

COLONEL SIBTHORP invited Sir R. Peel to meet him next Friday at the corn market in Lincoln. He would entertain the right hon. Gentleman generously, and give him the best bottle of wine he had

in the House; and then he would accompany the right hon. Baronet to the farmers' ordinaries and give him an opportunity to judge of the temper of mind that prevailed amongst them.

Mr. GREENE (the Chairman) then proposed the First Resolution, which reduced the duties on corn, grain, meal, or flour, which put and agreed to.*

Sir R. PEEL said, it had been suggested by the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) that buck-wheat, Indian corn, or maize, should be included in the First Resolution, instead of standing among the miscellanous articles in the Second Resolution. He therefore proposed to embody in a distinct Resolution those articles, and he hoped there would be no objection to this. [Mr. Miles: I object to that course.] The suggestion of the noble Lord was, that the duty should be immediately relinquished on those articles (buck-wheat, maize, or Indian corn); but he (Sir Robert Peel) having entered into an engagement that with regard to articles which were to be included in the new Corn Law he would not exercise on the part of the Treasury the power which they usually exercised, of remitting the duty immediately after the Resolution passed the House, but that the duty in respect to those articles should not be remitted until the Bill should have passed the House of Lords and have received the Royal Assent, he could not include buck-wheat, maize, and Indian corn in the First Resolution. He however, had hoped that there would have been no objection to the exercise of the power which the Treasury possessed in respect to these latter articles, should the House pass the Resolution proposed. The whole amount of duty would thus be remitted at once. He regretted that the hon. Member for Somersetshire should oppose this. He moved—

"That in lieu of the Duties of Customs now chargeable on the articles under-mentioned, imported into the United Kingdom, the following Duties shall be charged, viz.

	s.	d.
Buck-wheat, the quarter	1	0
Maize or Indian Corn, the quarter	1	0
—— Meal, the cwt.	0	4½
Rice, the cwt.	1	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	6
—— rough and in the husk, the quarter	1	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the quarter	0	1

Mr. O'CONNELL said, that the strongest sympathy had recently been expressed by the House towards Ireland, and he was sure it was sincere. Now it would be exceedingly beneficial to Ireland if the duty on Indian corn, buck-wheat, and maize, were remitted. He would not press hon. Gentlemen to do anything against their principles; but if, consistently with their principles, they could accede to this propoposition, he would most respectfully ask them to allow that these articles should be admitted at once duty free.

Mr. MILES said, that though it was not his intention to throw any opposition in the way of the Resolution immediately, he, at the same time, wished to tell the right hon. Gentleman, that when they came to take maize from the Tariff, and deal with it as if it were in the Corn Bill, they would materially affect the agricultural interest, not only as regarded the price of wheat, but also the price of barley and oats. His hope and trust was, that the right hon. Baronet merely wished to take the vote on it to-night; but what description of vote would it be? Was it that it should pass under the shilling duty immediately? If the Committee came to that conclusion, he for one would at once give it a decided negative. If the Government pleased on their own responsibility to take maize from the Tariff, it was necessary at once to take the objection. It was quite impossible for him (Mr. Miles) to bring forth all the arguments which justified his objections, as he did not know that this question was to come on. He wished that they should have some discussion on the subject. Notice of Motion was given at the very end of last Session, when no one was in the House, that there was an intention to move this Session for a total repeal of the duty on the article of maize. He believed that no observation was made on the subject at that time. It was said by the right hon. Baronet, that maize was used in America for fattening animals. He represented in the House of Commons that it was food fit for pigs; but the American papers said that those who were the authors of such a statement very much resembled swine themselves. The papers also confirmed the statements made by the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, who said that from his long residence in America he was well aware that what were there called "Johnny Cakes," went far to supersede the Yorkshire cakes. This maize then must come in direct competition not only with wheat,

* For Resolutions, see Vol. lxxxiii., p. 283.

but also with barley and oats, and therefore he thought that this discussion must come on at some period, in which hon. Members might have an opportunity of stating their opinions with respect to it. When they talked of the quantities of wheat produced in the United States, they ought to recollect the large quantities of maize that were produced also. There were seven hundred millions of quarters produced there last year. The produce was enormous. He was in hopes that it would come under the Corn Bill, and scarcely thought it right immediately to enter into a discussion on it. All he would say was, that it was his determination, if the Ministers proposed taking it out of the Tariff, to object to the Resolution.

SIR R. PEEL must, in justice, say that he had directly called the attention of his hon. Friend to the proposal, hoping it would answer his views. Some time since his right hon. Friends had taken upon themselves the responsibility, to lessen the pressure in Ireland, of ordering a large quantity of Indian corn from the United States, for which act they must ask for the indemnity of Parliament. He had reason to believe that many benevolent individuals looked upon it as a substitute for potatoes, of which he assured the House there were alarming accounts, and that if Indian corn were admitted duty free, individuals would at once spend a large sum in the purchase of Indian corn as a substitute for potatoes. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman that Indian corn properly prepared might make excellent food, and when the existing pressure was overcome, might make the best substitute for potatoes. He asked the hon. Gentleman whether he might not allow the Resolution to pass through Committee to-night, on the understanding that it should be reported the first thing on Monday, on which occasion it would be competent for the hon. Gentleman, if he so chose, to raise his objection. He thought that this arrangement might be satisfactory to the hon. Gentleman, who would then have an opportunity for consideration in the interval, and perhaps would see the advantage of admitting Indian corn, not only for the purpose of feeding cattle, but also for the purpose of feeding the people in the present emergency in Ireland. With respect to the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman, that Ministers might admit maize duty free by an order in Council, that would be a most unconstitutional proceeding while Parliament was sitting, and would form a most dangerous precedent.

MR. BRIGHT said, he should have been greatly surprised at the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, if he had not recollected the extraordinary objections raised by him on a former occasion. He was quite sure that the hon. Gentleman must see on a little consideration that he would be not only consulting the wishes of the House, but also those of the country, if he acquiesced in the proposition of the right hon. Baronet. No doubt the protectionists would not object to allow maize to come in, if, by so doing, they could only keep out wheat; but surely in the present day it could not be made an objection to the introduction of maize, that human beings would get a portion of it, and that it would not be confined exclusively to brute beasts. Considering the state of Ireland, he hoped hon. Gentlemen opposite would withdraw their opposition to the present proposition; or else, if they went on at this rate, they would not only lose their Corn Laws, but their character.

MR. MILES, though perfectly prepared to discuss the subject, yet knowing that certain objections were raised in the country to the introduction of maize, he thought it his duty to get up and to state shortly what those objections were. Hon. Gentlemen, when discharging their duty, should not be lectured so severely even by Corn Law repealers. He thought, though in opposition to the hon. Member, he had always given the hon. Member credit for honest motives, and he trusted that his own motives would not be impugned. He ought not to be held up to disapprobation, as expressing opinions which he felt to be inconsistent with reason. The Government had provided a large quantity of Indian corn for the consumption of the Irish people. He did not think that anything could be more legitimate than that, before a famine occurred, fearing that it might occur, the Government should take Indian corn out of bond duty free. But when it came to a question of having our markets inundated with this maize from America, it became quite necessary to interfere against any such proposition; and, at all events, their conduct in so interfering should not be thus impugned.

LORD G. BENTINCK: Sir, I cannot quite concur in the necessity which is alleged to exist for taking this maize out of bond; inasmuch as, practically speaking, I do not myself see the difference, in point

of advantage, between the Government paying the duty, and other parties doing so, for the Government would only pay it with one hand, and receive it with the other. I don't see any necessity for any hurry in respect of maize, more than exists in regard to any other articles of grain. I, for one, do not concur in the wisdom of Her Majesty's Government in proposing to feed the Irish people with maize; but, at the same time, it is not a point upon which I wish to quarrel with them, inasmuch as I conceive that, in that particular, they have acted to the best of their understanding. My own opinion, however, is, and I feel it strongly, that the true way to benefit Ireland would have been to have purchased Irish oats in the very localities in which the potato disease prevails; and I apprehend that the expense of feeding the Irish upon oats would have been very little greater than that of feeding them on Indian maize; whilst I am persuaded it would be a great blessing to many who are suffering from the disease in the potatoes, if they had thus found parchasers for their oats. I am not an Irishman, nor have I any property in Ireland; but if I at all understand the state and condition of agriculture in that part of the kingdom, and of the Irish population generally, almost every Irishman cultivates oats as well as potatoes, and sells his oats in order to procure the other necessaries of life. Now, if the Government introduce a great portion of maize into Ireland they will necessarily reduce the price of Irish oats; but, on the other hand, if they buy Irish oats, they will furnish that portion of the Irish population that is suffering under the potato disease with the means of buying those other necessaries of life. I think, then, that the Government committed a great mistake in buying maize, instead of going to Ireland and purchasing Irish oats—instead, in short, of feeding the Irish people on their own oats. Besides, I am persuaded it would have been more agreeable to the Irish people, and that they would have much preferred to be fed upon oatmeal, than with a food with which they are not acquainted, and to which their taste is not adapted. By sending to America, too, for maize, you have sent at the same time much money out of the country; whereas, if you had sent to Ireland and bought Irish oats, you would have enriched that country to a certain extent, and you would have increased instead of reducing the price of her oats. I do not approve of mixing up the potato famine with a matter that relates to feeding cattle rather than human beings, and there is consequently no necessity for any hurry in admitting maize free of duty.

Sir R. PEEL said, he did not propose to include buck-wheat and maize in the Corn Bill. The Corn Bill, which provided for the admission of rye, beans, barley, oats, and wheat, he proposed should be read a first time on Monday next, and he would fix the second reading for Monday week. It was not proposed to include the other articles which had been referred to in the Corn Bill; indeed rice never was included in the Corn Bill. The proposal which he made to the hon. Member for Somersetshire was, that he should permit these Resolutions to be voted in Committee to-night, and that the discussion should take place upon the Report of the Resolutions on Monday next, and should have precedence. He would make one remark in reply to his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck). The noble Lord said that the Government ought to have purchased Irish oats in Ireland, and the effect of that would have been to raise the price of oats in that country. That was very true, but then a great part of the population of this country — the manufacturing population of the west of England, derived their supply of oatmeal from Ireland. He referred to the west of Scotland and the west of England; and he would ask the noble Lord, whether he thought it just, that by an unusual intervention of the Government in purchasing Irish oats, and thereby raising the price, they should raise the price of the main article of subsistence in the west of Scotland, Lancashire, and Wales; and at the same time have refused any alteration in the Corn Law. That was one of the causes which he foresaw. There would have been complaints in those parts of the country where the price of food had been raised, not only that there was no alteration in the Corn Law, but that by the intervention of the Government they had raised the price of the chief article of their consumption. That was one of the points which they foresaw would make it difficult to refuse an alteration of the Corn Laws.

Mr. S. CRAWFORD considered that the Government had acted wisely in not interfering with the price of oats in Ireland; for, by their not doing so, many in Ireland were now able to supply themselves with oats, who could not have purchased them had the price been raised upon them. In this matter, then, he was bound to say

that the Government had exercised a wise discretion.

LORD J. RUSSELL remarked, that no one could refuse to the hon. Member for Somersetshire the credit of believing that he was influenced by feelings of humanity on this and other subjects; and he must also add, that he was not surprised that to the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the hon. Member should have made some objection. He did trust now, however, that the hon. Member would consent to the proposal; adopt these Resolutions in Committee that night, and take the discussion on Monday. The whole difference in the matter must be, that by adopting this course, they would take the discussion a few days sooner than it would otherwise come on. These articles were contained in the Tariff; but the Tariff might be delayed from various causes. As he understood the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, it was that these articles might be admitted immediately at a low duty. He had also to add that he thought the Government had exercised a sound discretion in ordering a supply of Indian corn; for if they had purchased the oats in the markets in Ireland in the name of the Government, they would have raised the price of food; whilst now they had, without raising the price, added to the quantity of food in the country. But then came the question whether such Indian corn should be admitted free to meet an emergency, or be permitted to be introduced permanently? That was a proper question to consider, and it would be quite competent for the hon. Gentleman to move an Amendment to the effect, that Indian corn should be only admitted for a certain period, or for the recommittal of the Resolution. He trusted that when the question was discussed, it would be debated with calmness, and with a due consideration for the present state of Ireland. The hon. Member for Somersetshire was fully justified in seeking for discussion, and he saw no objection to its being taken upon the Report of the Committee.

The EARL of MARCH hoped, after what had fallen from the noble Lord the Member for London, that his hon. Friend would withdraw his objection for the present. He was surprised, however, to hear the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government say that the state of Ireland now required the immediate passing of these Resolutions. The right hon. Gentleman knew of that state when he brought forward his Tariff; and now, in the course of a few weeks, he took these articles out of the Tariff, and wished to press them on the attention of the Legislature.

MR. DISRAELI wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman what quantity of corn had been imported by Her Majesty's Government into Ireland?

SIR R. PEEL replied, that orders had been given to purchase Indian corn and rye to the amount of 100,000*l.*; but what quantity of corn had been purchased with that sum he did not recollect.

COLONEL SIBTHORP understood that the hon. Member for Durham, who was fond of imputing motives to his opponents, was a prominent character in the Anti-Corn-Law League; and then there was the hon. Member for Bolton, who was the chaplain in ordinary, or the extraordinary chaplain of the League; and he wished to know from both, when they talked so much of their humanity, why they did not give 50,000*l.* to relieve the Irish? Let the hon. Member for Durham, and the League, act on their philanthropy, and down with the dust. Don't let them lay out their money in buying up votes, and bringing over to their opinions those unlearned persons who, he was sorry to say, were too unsuspecting of their tricks.

MR. C. GORING suggested to the Government that in Committee of Supply they should propose a vote of 100,000*l.*, to pay for the Indian corn required by the necessities of Ireland.

MR. W. MILES said, that for the purpose of showing his desire to relieve the distress which was threatened, he was willing to add a proviso to the Resolution or to-night, empowering the Government to take out of bond or to import maize, buck wheat, or Indian corn, free of all duty, for the next three months.

MR. BRIGHT wished to say a few words with regard to the permanent duty to be levied on Indian corn. The duty of 1*s.* on Indian corn would often be six per cent upon the cost in America, and generally five per cent. The Government might have some object in continuing this duty; but if the principle of no duty was satisfactory in the case of cotton and other articles, and no inconvenience was experienced at the Custom-house, he thought that the right hon. Baronet might be willing to reduce this duty, if any were required for registration, to one penny the quarter, or else allow it to come in entirely free. He wished to know if this subject had been

under the consideration of the right hon. Baronet and his Colleagues?

SIR R. PEEL: The duty was, in fact, a merely nominal one; and considering the very extensive reductions proposed on other sorts of grain, he hoped the hon. Gentleman would not oppose this part of the measure.

MR. W. ELLIS assured hon. Gentleman that, in consequence of the delay which had taken place, and the uncertainty which prevailed with regard to the measures before the House, a great check to employment was experienced in the manufacturing districts.

The first five articles in the Tariff were also agreed to as follows:—

"*Resolved*—That in lieu of the Duties on Customs now chargeable on the articles under-mentioned, imported into the United Kingdom, the following Duties shall be charged, viz.

	£	s.	d.
Agates or Cornelians, cut, manufactured, or set, for every 100*l.* value . . .	10	0	0
Ale and Beer of all sorts, the barrel .	1	0	0
Almonds, Paste of, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Amber, Manufactures of, not enumerated, for every 100*l.* value . . .	10	0	0
Arrow Root, the cwt.	0	2	6
——— of and from a British Possession, per cwt.	0	0	6

Resolution to be reported.

House resumed, and Committee to sit again.

Adjourned at half-past Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 9, 1846.

MINUTES] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Print Works. 2ª Prosecutors, Witnesses, &c.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Landowners, Tenants, Labourers, and others, from Codnor, and several other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest.—From Inhabitants of Woodbury and Crediton, against Alteration of the Corn Laws.—From South Moreton, Brightwell, and Cholsey, against the Measure relating to Customs and Corn Importation.—From Chester, against the Principles of Free Trade.—From Landowners and others interested in Protection to Native Cultivation of Hops in the County of Sussex, against the Reduction of Duty on Hops.—From Members of the Roman Catholic Church in the Counties of Durham and Northumberland, complaining of the Usurpation of Patronage by Roman Catholic Bishops, for Relief, and for the Better Regulation of Charitable Bequests.

THE BASILIAN NUNS OF MINSK.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY rose for the purpose of asking the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a question of considerable importance, in reference to a document presented to the Roman Government by M. de Boutenieff, the Russian Minister, replying to the atrocious calumnies which had been circulated as to the treatment of the Basilian nuns by order of the Emperor. He wished to know if the noble Lord had seen the document, as he thought it right the public should be informed of the true state of the case?

The EARL of ABERDEEN replied that he had received a copy of the document to which the noble Lord alluded, and had every reason to believe it was to be considered as the official answer of the Russian Government to the reports which had been circulated as to certain persecutions and severities said to have been endured by the Basilian nuns of Minsk. When the subject was brought before the notice of the House a few days ago, he took the liberty of observing that, whether those reports were true or false, the matter to which they referred was one with which the House had nothing to do; and that it would be unwise to take any steps in reference to it. At the same time he expressed his incredulity respecting those reports, and declared he did not place any belief in the truth of the accusations which had been made against the Russian Government; whilst he admitted that there might have been some ecclesiastical severity, and even what might be called by some persons religious persecution, exercised on the nuns, he was of opinion that the horrors which had been described were utterly out of the question. Since that statement was made, it appeared that the person who was said to have circulated the reports in question had no existence, or at least the Russian Government denied that they knew anything of her, and affirmed that they were utterly ignorant of her name. Under those circumstances, and in consequence of the document in question, he could not hesitate to say that the incredulity he formerly expressed had been very much confirmed. He might state, in addition to these facts, that the Roman Government had thought proper to write to the nuncios of the different Courts of Europe, for the purpose of declaring that the statement as to depositions purporting to have been taken at Rome, by order of the Pope, had no foundation in truth—disavowing the depositions altogether, and stating that they had no knowledge whatever of any such interrogatories.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY expressed his gratification at the reply of the noble Lord.

LORD BEAUMONT remarked, that though it was quite true the House would have had no right to interfere respecting

those reports, he thought they could have stated their utter horror at the substance of them, supposing they were true.

PROSECUTORS, WITNESSES, &c. BILL.

Lord DENMAN moved the Second Reading of the Bill, "For the Punishment of such as shall endeavour to deter Prosecutors, Witnesses, and Jurors, from the discharge of their duty;" and, in doing so, took occasion to refer to the Amendments in the Bill for the Protection of Life in Ireland. He had heard with great horror and regret the statement of the noble Lord (the Earl of St. Germans) with respect to the system of intimidation exercised on persons employed in furthering the ends of justice in Ireland; and, although he felt himself now precluded by the decision of their Lordships on the second reading of the Bill brought forward by Government, he could not help saying, that the particular provisions were still open to discussion. He had not been able, on account of public duties, to attend either on that debate or in the Committee; and, with leave of the House, would take that occasion to express what he thought of some importance on those enactments. He was sure the less stringent the Bill was made, the less likely to interfere with the ordinary feelings of our nature, the greater would be its chance of success; and, whilst it gave less offence to the community, it would become more efficient for the purpose for which it was intended. It appeared to him that the grounds on which the 1st Clause, giving the Lord Lieutenant the power of proclaiming any district, rested, were not sufficient, and ought not to be set forth on the face of an Act of Parliament as a foundation for the extraordinary powers which it proposed to confer. The clause enacted that any district in which any murder, or attempt to murder, or any assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, had been committed, might, on evidence of such offence, be proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant. Now, the offences thus enumerated existed throughout every county in England; and there was not a district in this country which might not on the same grounds be proclaimed. One could not help feeling some degree of alarm lest the provisions of such a Bill should become an example, on some supposed necessity, of legislation for England, and its application recommended on the same grounds. It had appeared to him, that in order to justify the proclamation of a district, it would be desirable that three or more justices of the peace should make representation of the facts of the offences committed therein to the Lord Lieutenant; but he found, on inquiry, that the police reports for the various constabulary districts afforded him full information as to the details of every outrage occurring in the country. It would be much better that on their report the Lord Lieutenant should be authorized to act, with the advice of the Privy Council, according to his own sense of the exigency of the case. He was not sure that any Act was requisite to authorize the establishment of any number of police throughout a proclaimed district, except in so far as it was necessary to fix the place in which they were required with the additional expense. With respect to the clause requiring persons to keep within their own dwellings after sunset and before sunrise, and attaching a penalty for the non-observance of the regulation of transportation for fifteen years—or even of seven years, to which term it was proposed to alter it—he must confess that he felt the very greatest reluctance to any Bill which granted such a power, without requiring the fullest proof of guilt in every particular case. The mere right to take an individual into custody was in itself very large and extensive; and he thought that every person on being arrested should be allowed to give an explanation of his appearance out at night to persons competent to decide as to its satisfactory character. He confessed that he entertained the greatest reluctance to the clause whereby it would be made lawful to send any person taken up by the police between sunset and sunrise to prison, and to trial; and would suggest that, if his explanation was satisfactory, he should be at once released. In case only one magistrate should be present, he was to wait for the next petty sessions; and if then only one magistrate should attend, he was to be sent to prison at all events; but he thought it rather hard that the prisoner's fate should depend on such an accident as the number of magistrates who might be present. He felt a strong repugnance to the punishment which this Bill proposed to inflict. He could not conceive, that a Bill which enacted that a man should be punished by seven years' transportation for the mere offence of being out between sunset and sunrise, could have a good effect. They knew that such a punishment, in very many instances, amounted to transporta-

tion for life; because persons of humble rank who were sent for that period to the penal settlements were most frequently unable to procure the means of returning. The very possibility of such severe punishment would, in his opinion, be calculated to deter from prosecution, and defeat the operation of the Bill. He was told that transportation was greatly dreaded by the lower orders, whilst they had no fears of imprisonment; but he was convinced that the power of apprehension was the power of preventing mischief, at least for the time, and that imprisonment was no light matter, especially to labouring men. He had suggested to the noble Lord (the Earl of St. Germans) that it might not be wrong to make a distinction between the first, second, and third occasion in which offences under the Act had been committed. He took the liberty of recommending that a successive repetition of these offences should be considered necessary to expose the prisoner to the severest form of punishment, and would propose that for the first time, that is, for the breach of a mere police regulation, which might be perfectly innocent, and proceed even from praiseworthy motives, he should be treated with lenity; that on his repetition of any breach of the Act, he should be more severely punished, as guilty of contumacy, and of sinning against the law, calling for more severity, though but a *malum prohibitum,* and not a *malum in se;* and that only for a third offence, which would raise a strong suspicion of his concurring in mischievous objects, he should be subjected to the extreme penalty of the Act. If it thus went forth that transportation were a punishment to which the offender would be liable on the repetition of his offence, the law would become more effective from the reduction in the extreme punishment, and from the gradations of penalty. On the power to change the venue for the trial of offenders, he could only say that he saw no objection to it; for he thought the very necessity for introducing such an Act as the present necessarily imported that such a change of venue ought to take place. It could not be possible that persons employed in furthering and executing justice could be free from danger if there were such associations and persons as had been supposed to exist in order to justify that Act; and he thought the law in this country could be extended with much advantage to Ireland. It was some consolation to hear from the noble Lord, that jurors in Ireland had not been deterred from the performance of their duty by intimidation or dread of violence; though not intimidated, they could not fail to be endangered by the state of things described. He was, nevertheless, of opinion, that the law in reference to that subject which existed in England ought to be a general law, and had frequently expressed his conviction that it ought to be rendered applicable to all parts of the kingdom whenever circumstances arose which called for its exercise. As to the offence charged in this Act, of intimidating witnesses, jurors, or prosecutors, surely it was one of the gravest offences that could be committed against human society, and should be provided for, not by a local enactment for a temporary purpose, but by a general Act extending to all times and places. He was convinced that the adoption of the hints he had thrown out would render the Bill more effectual for its immediate purposes, and would facilitate the return to the law and Constitution of England, the only remedy for the evils with which Ireland was afflicted.

Lord BROUGHAM agreed with his noble Friend that there was every reason for making the law, in the cases he alluded to, general and not local. He must deny, however, to-night, as he did on a former occasion, that a less punishment was inflicted for being out at night than the offence called for. In the first place, the punishment was left to the discretion of the Judge. And, in the next place, in order to constitute the offence, it must be proved that he was "out under suspicious circumstances, and not on his lawful occasions." But it was said there was no possibility of a man proving, when taken up, that he was out on his lawful occasions. Why, the proclamation of the district was an intimation to all liege subjects of Her Majesty that, if they went out after sunset, they should furnish themselves with proof that it was on their lawful occasions. A man able to justify his being out would not be punished at all, the Judge being enabled to exercise a wide discretion, from the infliction of 1*s.* fine to transportation for life. He heard from all the noble Lords connected with Ireland to whom he had spoken, that nothing but the fear of transportation in such aggravated cases as going about armed at night would have the effect of preventing such offences. He approved of the limitation of the Bill to three years; for if it did no good in three years, it would do no good at all; if it was not effectual in

that period they must take other modes of meeting the evil.

EARL GREY said, that his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) had misapprehended the argument both of the Lord Chief Justice and himself. His noble and learned Friend said that the offence was not merely being out at night, but being out under suspicious circumstances. Now, he (Earl Grey) wished once more to call upon the House to consider how little practical difference was made by the introduction of the words "suspicious circumstances." He maintained that a man might be perfectly innocent, although out under suspicious circumstances; and was a man to be transported, for mere suspicious circumstances, if he had not committed any real offence? Suppose a man was found going to see a dying relation, and that in the same direction there was a Whiteboy meeting—that would be a suspicious circumstance. He might have told the persons in his cabin that he was going to see a dying relation; but their statement of his intentions would not be received in evidence. And even in the case of a person who was going to a Whiteboy meeting, there would be nothing practically before the court but the mere fact of his being out at night. The effect of this law would be, that the Irish peasant would be liable for a mere act of forgetfulness, perhaps, in being out in the proscribed hours. He was glad to hear the Lord Chief Justice giving the weight of his knowledge of criminal and constitutional law in favour of the Amendment he (Earl Grey) had proposed. The more he reflected on the matter, the more repugnant he felt it was to justice to punish these offences in this severe way. Let the offence of being out at night armed or disguised, be made a separate offence. There would be no difficulty about that. The case of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Brougham) he must feel wanted a great deal of bolstering up to make it appear decent to the public. A more palpable instance of misapprehension of the arguments which had been used in this case than the speech of the noble and learned Lord, he (Earl Grey) had never heard in the whole course of his Parliamentary experience.

LORD BROUGHAM: If the noble Earl lives much longer, I promise him he will have to put up with many similar misapprehensions. Now, as to the noble Earl's right to claim my noble and learned Friend the Chief Justice as the supporter of his views, he must be consistent, and pledge my noble and learned Friend to the infliction of a three years' imprisonment for the venial offence of being merely out at night, as proposed by his own (Earl Grey's) Amendment.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS pledged himself that all the suggestions of the noble and learned Lord should receive the consideration they deserved as coming from such high authority, in the interval which would elapse before the Government brought up the Report on their Bill. As to the transportation clause, he thought it best to leave the question of culpability to the discretion of a Judge assisted by a jury. He fully agreed in the principle of the noble and learned Lord's Bill, and should be happy to see it adopted by Parliament.

The EARL of STRADBROKE: Wha possible objection could there be to providing that a man when out within the proscribed hours should be liable to two years' imprisonment, but that when armed he should be liable to transportation?

LORD CAMPBELL hoped that the grave offence of intimidating jurors would be punished by a general Act, as prepared by his noble and learned Friend the Chief Justice. Such should be the permanent law, and the proposed change would meet with his hearty concurrence. He hoped some such suggestion as that of the noble Earl (the Earl of Stradbroke) would be adopted; for the great error of the clause alluded to was, that it clubbed together offences of a totally different nature; that it rendered liable to the same punishment a man out of his house for a diabolical purpose, and the man who was merely contemplating the beauties of nature, or some other beauty to him equally enticing. It was not now too late to introduce two clauses, so as to obviate all the objections which had been urged. As to the proposal of changing the venue, the only fair course was that adopted in the Bill of 1833—leave the question to the discretion of the Queen's Bench, on the application of either prisoner or prosecutor.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, he entirely approved of the Bill of the Lord Chief Justice, and he was disposed to give it his hearty support. The question of discretion in the Judge was the most simple question in the world. All who objected to the clause admitted that the punishment should be discretionary. According to the Bill which the noble and learned Lord (Lord Campbell) had himself introduced in

1834, an Irishman out at night in a proclaimed district was liable to three years' imprisonment, with hard labour; and he was to be tried, not by the regular tribunals, but by a court-martial. All agreed that the punishment ought to be discretionary. The question was as to the limit. The offence might assume ten thousand different shades; it might be justly punished by mprisonment for a day; it might well deserve transportation for seven years. But they could not anticipate all these cases of suspicion—they could not define beforehand every case that might arise; the whole must be left, as in many other cases, to the discretion of the court which tried the prisoner. There was no fear of trusting such a discretion to the Judges of Ireland, mildly and humanely as the law was administered there, and he trusted, therefore, that the clause would be suffered to stand as it was.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS intimated that he would defer till Thursday the bringing up of the Report on the Protection to Life and Property Bill.

The DUKE of RICHMOND thought there ought to be no delay in promoting this measure. The justification put forth for the Bill was, its immediate and absolute necessity; and he could see no other reason for the proposed delay than that Government did not wish to send down a Bill that might not be very palatable to some of their new Friends in the other House.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS agreed with the noble Duke, that no unnecessary delay should take place; but at the same time it was very important that the provisions of the Bill should be carefully considered, and any Amendments adopted which would not destroy the efficacy of the measure. Besides, in the present state of business in the House of Commons, it was impossible that, even if sent down, the measure could be taken up there at present.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE protested against delay. If the measure was so absolutely necessary as had been represented, no Customs Duties Bill should be allowed to interfere with its progress. But he must say this was just like the conduct of the Government on this subject, for when they were on the same Bill the other evening, they had only the advantage of the presence of three or four Cabinet Ministers out of seven who had a seat in that House. He must say, too, that the whole of the argument in support of the Bill was from that (the Opposition) side of the House. He gave the Bill his support, because he held it to be necessary for the protection of the innocent. He would prove to their Lordships, though he would not mention names, that in a considerable town in one of the disturbed parts of Ireland persons in business employed in the banks there, were obliged to go out to take the exercise necessary for their health earlier than was usual, because they dared not be out after nightfall. It might be thought a great hardship to punish a man for being out after nightfall; but who were the parties who were punished at present? Was it not those who were afraid to go beyond their own doors at night, lest they should be attacked? He held, therefore, that Government should not delay the measure on account of a Bill about Customs duties, or any measure of that kind, however important it might be to party or national interests. He would support the transportation clause, as one that was necessary, considering the state of Ireland. It might be a strong measure; but he always thought it more dangerous to see Government straining a law beyond what it would naturally bear, than passing a stringent law to serve a temporary object, and which was of such a strong character that the country was sure not to permit it to remain long on the Statute Book. The Bill was absolutely necessary for the pacification of Ireland. Even the Repeal Association found that it could do nothing towards that end. They sent down into the disturbed districts a person called the head pacificator, who, he believed, had been sometimes very useful in this respect; but in this instance he totally failed. Seeing then that they had found every kind of persuasion and influence which existed in Ireland failing to produce pacification, their only course was to give to the Ministers the powers which they asked; and if it was right that those powers should be given, then, he contended, that no delay should take place.

The EARL of WICKLOW thought that if the Bill was not of so imperative a character as to demand that it should take precedence of all other measures, it ought not to pass. As it would not be in his power to attend on Thursday night, he would now state an objection which might be brought against the proposal for bringing the case of prisoners out after nightfall before the petty sessions. The petty sessions met every week; but a person might be apprehended on the evening of the day on which they met, and thus he would be

confined a whole week before his case could come under the consideration of the sessions. It was said that if the power of judging of such cases was left to a single magistrate, he would be put in danger by the discharge of his duty; but he had no fear of such a thing; for in Ireland there had never been manifested any disposition to injure a magistrate for the performance of his duty. Another point of consideration was, that they had no power to compel the attendance of gentlemen to form a petty sessions. Meetings might in consequence not be held, and thus a man who was in custody might be kept in prison from week to week till a meeting of petty sessions actually took place.

LORD MONTEAGLE would venture to suggest a mode by which the inconvenience referred to by the noble Earl might be met. It was quite true that petty sessions might not be very regularly held; but he objected to a single magistrate having the power to dismiss a man found out after nightfall. On the other hand, if they did not interpose the authority of a single magistrate, they might subject an innocent man to great inconvenience. What he proposed, therefore, was, that a person apprehended under that Act should be at once brought before the next neighbouring magistrate, and that he should have the power of bailing the person to appear before the petty sessions. They would thus meet the inconvenience referred to by the noble Earl, without vesting in a single magistrate the power of judging in the case.

The LORD CHANCELLOR asked if his noble Friend meant that it should be imperative on the magistrates to bail a man?

LORD MONTEAGLE would give the magistrate a discretionary power.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS had no other object in delay than to have the Amendment coolly and deliberately considered. He was happy to inform their Lordships, that to-morrow his noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack would take the Amendments into consideration, and put them in such a shape that he would be enabled to lay them before the House to-morrow evening.

LORD BROUGHAM had found a very singular illustration of the argument he had used the other night in the Bill of the noble and learned Lord. It appeared that by that Bill a man might be sent to Botany Bay for taking a stone out of a wall, or a stick out of a hedge, the person to whom the stick or the stone belonged being a prosecutor or witness in any case in which the offender had been concerned. This fully bore out all he had said in favour of the transportation clause.

LORD DENMAN thought it rather unfair that his noble and learned Friend should draw any argument from the Bill in the particular position in which it then stood. He did not expect that the Bill in its present form would meet their Lordships' full concurrence. It did not even meet his own; and he had stated that in Committee it would require a great deal of consideration and amendment. He objected, therefore, to the noble and learned Lord drawing any conclusions from what was in the Bill. But at the same time he would ask, was there anything like a similarity in the object of the clause referred to in this Bill, and in that which made it a crime to be out after sunset? There was a very great distinction. The one was a mere police regulation; the other was a heinous crime. He found that, by one Bill, for the first offence they could transport a man seven years, who might be perfectly innocent, except in so far as he violated an Act of Parliament; but no man could possibly be innocent who committed the crime which his noble and learned Friend had pointed out in his (Lord Denman's) Bill.

LORD BROUGHAM had no doubt that his noble and learned Friend would alter his Bill: but he would venture to prophesy that when the Bill had gone through Committee it would just be liable to the same objection as now.

Bill read 2ª.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 9, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW WRIT. For Windsor, *v.* Ralph Neville, Esq., Commissioner of the Treasury.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Corn Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Henley, from Rural Dean and Clergy of the Rural Deanery of Bicester, against the Union of St. Asaph and Bangor Dioceses.—By Mr. Hume, from Members of the British India Association of Dublin, for Inquiry into the Case of the Rajah of Sattara.—By Mr. Octavius Duncombe, from several places in the County of York, against any Diminution in the Protection hitherto granted to Agriculture.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Provost, Baillies, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Lanark, for Commercial Reform.—By Mr. Octavius Duncombe, from several places in the County of York, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Mr. Fuller, from Landowners, Tenants, and others, interested in Protection to the Cultivation of Native Hops, in the County of Sus-

sex, against Reduction of Duty on Hops.—By Dr. Bowring, from Members of the Belfast Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for Abolition of Queen's Plates at Horse Races.—By Mr. Tatton Egerton, from Trustees of the Manchester and Buxton Roads, for Repeal of Duty on Post Horses.—By Mr. Sotheron, from Inhabitants of the Parish of Highworth, for Rating Owners in lieu of Occupiers of Tenements.—By Mr. Baine, from the Chamber of Commerce of Greenock, in favour of the proposed Government Measure respecting the Timber Duties.—By Mr. John Fielden, from Inhabitants of Todmorden and Oldham, for Remission of Sentence upon William S. Ellis.—By Mr. Morgan John O'Connell, from Fishermen of Kilkee, Baltard, Bahalaglass, Farratry, Doonbeg, &c., on the South West Coast of Ireland, complaining of Distress.—By Mr. John Fielden, from Inhabitants of Todmorden and Oldham, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Thomas Hussey, from Justices of the Peace for the Borough of Lyme Regis, for Defining the Limits of the Borough.—By Mr. Hume, from Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, G.C.B., and Samuel Banker, Accountant, for Inquiry into the State of the Merchant Seamen's Fund.—By Mr. Bright, Sir William Somerville, and Sir John Tyrrell, from various places, against Enrolment of the Militia.—By Sir Arthur Brooke, from Members of the Board of Guardians of the Linaskea Poor Law Union, for Alteration of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Jonathan Duncan, Esq., of No. 13, Chester Place, Kennington, and Proprietor of the "Sentinel" Newspaper, complaining of Mismanagement at the Post Office.—By Mr. Buck, from Proprietors and others interested in the Salmon Fisheries of the Rivers Taw and Torridge, against the Salmon Fisheries Bill.—By Mr. Strutt, from Ratepayers of the Parish of Ilkeston, against the proposed Measure respecting Settlement.

AMALGAMATION OF RAILWAYS.

Mr. W. PATTEN said, he had been directed to make an inquiry of the Vice President of the Board of Trade with respect to the very important question of the amalgamation of existing Railway Companies. The Railway Committee of which he was a Member experienced great difficulty in the cases of amalgamation which came before them. He was induced to ask the question which he was about to put to the right hon. Gentleman, not only for the purpose of enlightening the Railway Committees, but also the public at large, because it was one which involved circumstances of a very serious nature. He wished, then, to know whether the Government intended taking any measure this Session with the view of settling the different amalgamation Bills now before Parliament. The Committee had directed him to put the question before they proceeded any further with the subject. One or two plans had been submitted for the settlement of the question; but he thought he might state that the opinion of the Committees was, that a question of such vast importance to the country would be much more satisfactorily determined upon by the Government, and if not by them, at least by some Select Committee to be appointed by the House. He therefore wished to ask the Government whether they intended taking any step in the matter?

Sir G. CLERK said, that how far and under what circumstances the amalgamation of existing railways should be permitted, had been fully considered by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade last year; whose last Report was exclusively upon the subject of the amalgamation of railways, entering fully into the subject, and laying down general rules under which they thought amalgamations might be permitted. It was impossible for him to say that under no circumstances was it expedient for two or more railways to amalgamate; because there was no doubt that great advantage would arise from having the traffic on lines in the same direction under one general control. Great public inconvenience might arise from amalgamation of parallel lines, because that deprived the public of the benefit of competition. These principles were laid down in the Report of the Board of Trade last Session; and it also showed how they were to be applied to the schemes then in agitation; but the House judged differently, and allowed the amalgamations. It was not in the power of the Government or the Board of Trade to state more fully the principles upon which amalgamations should be conducted; but they must be applied according to the particular circumstances of each case. He thought it would be expedient that the question of all amalgamations should be referred to one Committee, and that the lines amalgamating should not be placed in different groups. They were generally not opposed, and the Committees directing their attention principally to those Bills which were opposed, did not attend to these amalgamating lines. The Committee which sat in 1839, and of which the hon. Member for Liskeard was Chairman, and that of 1842, over which his right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Colonies presided, had entered on this question, and directed attention to the inconvenience of allowing these Bills to pass as matters of course. He did not think, however, that any rule could be laid down beyond that mentioned in the Report of the Board of Trade, unless the expedient of referring all these Bills to one Committee was adopted.

FAMINE AND DISEASE IN IRELAND.

Mr. O'CONNELL, in rising to put the question to the right hon. Baronet opposite

of which he had given notice, hoped that he would be allowed to preface it by a few observations. He wished to acquaint the right hon. Baronet that the accounts received that day from Ireland, with regard to the progress of the potato disease, were really frightful. The persons who had examined the condition of the crop in the neighbourhood of Fermoy a fortnight ago had thought that there would have been, in all probability, enough left to last until the month of June; but so rapid had been the progress of the disease during that fortnight, that the potatoes had been nearly all destroyed. From Skibbereen and other places the accounts reported an increase also of the disease. The right hon. Baronet would not imagine that he entertained the least doubt of his sincerity in the professions he had made of his desire to alleviate the condition of the poor in Ireland; but the simple fact fact was, that there was no time to be lost. Delay would be fatal, and the sums of money already voted would not be of the least avail. Other means were wanting. There were Irish resources available. They (the Irish people) were not suing *in forma pauperis*. There were resources in their country, and some further measures should be adopted to meet the exigencies of their case. He would ask, whether the Government was prepared to lay before the House a statement of the measures taken by them to obviate the impending famine and disease in Ireland?

SIR ROBERT PEEL: I am sorry to say that the statement made by the hon. and learned Gentleman does not fall much short of the impression first formed in my mind with regard to the pressure that might be expected in some districts, and the difficulties of the inhabitants of those districts. From the accounts received in the months of October and November last, I certainly did anticipate that the fears then expressed would be in a great degree realized; and the hon. and learned Gentleman is aware that the first act of Her Majesty's Government was to propose some measures that would be calculated to have the effect of mitigating the impending distress, by providing the best mode of relief—the supply of employment for the people. The hon. and learned Gentleman must feel that the best mode of relieving a people, with a view to their moral position, is by enabling them to supply their own wants by obtaining payment for their labour. In justice to the poorer classes—to those classes who are in a state of destitution—it would, I think, be infinitely more agreeable to their feelings, that they should be enabled to earn their subsistence by honest labour than by any other mode. The hon. and learned Gentleman is aware that the very first act of Her Majesty's Government, even preliminary to that important one which is to come under the discussion of the House this evening, was to bring in three or four measures for the relief of the poor in Ireland. We brought forward measures for the erection of piers and harbours on the southern and western coasts of Ireland, in order to enable the inhabitants with the better security to carry on their fisheries. We proposed measures to give to the grand juries of Ireland a power to raise money and to make presentments for the raising of funds for the prosecution of public works. There are other measures, also, which will involve the advance of large sums of public money. I have much satisfaction in knowing that all those measures have passed into law. The sums raised by them may possibly be inadequate for the purpose of remedying the distress. But whilst Parliament is sitting, there can be no difficulty in obtaining such further measures as may be requisite. And I must say, that if Parliament were not sitting, I should have no hesitation in taking upon myself the responsibility, as First Lord of the Treasury, of adopting such measures as I should think necessary to meet the exigencies of the case. Nothing can be easier than to obtain renewed and enlarged power; but I think the hon. and learned Gentleman will agree with me, that it is wise not to be too liberal. The great dependence must, of course, be upon the spontaneous charity of the landed proprietors and others. There is an undoubted claim upon the landed proprietors, who will not fail to come forward at this period of general distress. Without their aid, without the local efforts of those who are acquainted with the particular circumstances of the district, the intervention of the Government would be useless. But we are satisfied that the landed proprietors of that part of the Empire will not fail in their duty in this instance, as there have been many cases in which they have shown a disposition cordially and effectually to unite with Government. As the pressure becomes more severe, the anxiety on the part of the clergy, never behind-hand in works of charity, will

be augmented; and they and the landed proprietors will zealously co-operate with Government in meeting and mitigating the evil. Then we have made other proposals as to inland navigation, and other matters more or less affecting private rights, which will have a beneficial tendency; but the sum actually provided by Government is by no means inconsiderable; and it will admit of farther increase if the pressure should be more severe than we at present anticipate. I stated the other night, that early in the season, in the months of October and November last, we took upon ourselves the responsibility of providing a supply of provisions, by giving orders for the expenditure of 100,000*l.* in Indian corn and rice, which but for our intervention could not at present have come to this country. Those cargoes have arrived, and we propose to give facilities to the benevolent to obtain it at a low rate, in order that they may supply the wants of the distressed by distributing it at even a lower rate. If the Report of the Resolutions passed on Friday with so little opposition be brought up to-night, the duty on Indian corn, buck-wheat, and rice, will be absolutely repealed. Considerable private property has been involved with the same intention, in addition to what Government has done; and I trust that individuals feeling for their poorer neighbours will avail themselves of the reduction of duty, and obtain information as to the localities where assistance is most required. In some parts of the country, I am told, there is a prejudice against the use of maize; but I apprehend that in the United States it is employed very generally for the purpose of food, and there are modes of dressing and preparing it by which the bread made from it is as palatable as that composed of wheat. Government has taken pains to ascertain in what mode Indian corn is employed to the best advantage, so as to render it perfectly palatable. The Commission now sitting in Dublin will be happy to give every information upon the subject to landed proprietors who may be desirous of availing themselves of it. We have completed our organization with a view to this calamity throughout the country, by means of the police and other public establishments; but I hope the hon. and learned Member will not call upon me to explain the details of our particular measures. I assure him that both with respect to famine, and what is to be expected as its consequences, fever, we have taken all possible precautions. Our main reliance must still be placed on the co-operation of the landed interest with local aid; and I have the utmost confidence in that resource. I again assure the hon. and learned Member that every precaution that can be taken by Government has been taken, not within the last week or fortnight, but long ago. I trust it will be found that we have shown a provident care, and an adaptation of means to the end, that will meet with the approbation of Parliament. I do not know that any measures could be suggested that have not been anticipated; but to give the particular details would tend to defeat the object all have in view.

THE TARIFF.

Sir R. H. INGLIS wished to ask another question in connexion with the present one. The right hon. Baronet had stated that as soon as a Bill founded on the Resolutions should have passed, the duties would cease and determine. Would it not be desirable that a separate Bill should be introduced to admit the introduction of those articles of food which now could be brought into immediate use, such as Indian corn, buck-wheat, and rice? To such a measure there would be little or no opposition. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would state such was his intention.

Sir R. PEEL said, he had stated that it was not proposed to include rice, buck-wheat, or Indian corn. None of the duties included in the Tariff would be remitted by a Treasury order; he should wait till the Bill was passed. But these duties on Indian corn, buck-wheat, and rice, would be included in the general Tariff; and it was proposed by a Treasury order to admit the introduction of these three articles, buck-wheat, rice, and Indian corn, as soon as the Resolutions should have passed; but, in order to prevent the possibility of any jealousy on the subject, he was perfectly prepared to declare that the Treasury order should admit them for a limited period only—that a bond should be taken in the case of every remittance, providing that the whole amount of duties should be paid in the event of the Bill not receiving the sanction either of the Lords and Commons. He trusted that the Tariff was of that nature that it would not be necessary to propose a separate Bill, because it was quite clear that the authority of Parliament to reject the Bill would be maintained by the

order being temporary in its duration, and by a bond being taken.

DR. BOWRING suggested that measures should be taken to ascertain from consular returns what was the state of the crops in the countries to which we might look for a supply. As there were countries in which the use of Indian corn was universal, it might not be impossible to obtain some information as to the various methods in which this very important article of food was prepared.

SIR R. PEEL said, that he had received communications from benevolent persons in the United States, and in some parts of France, where Indian corn was very extensively used. He was in possession of ample information as to the mode of preparing Indian corn. At a very early period Government addressed an order to all the Consuls in Europe to send returns. He believed that in every part of Europe the potato crop had been affected, with the exception of some parts of Italy, where a small quantity was grown, and in Spain. Speaking generally of the north of Europe —Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Hanover—there was scarcely a part where the potato crop was not affected. In Prince Edward's Island, Nova Scotia, and many parts of the United States, the potato crop had also been affected. No dependence could be placed on any import of potatoes from abroad. He believed that many individuals had given orders for considerable quantities of potatoes for their own use; but the quantity required was so enormous, and there was so much risk during the voyage, that no great dependence could be placed on the import of potatoes.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

Report of the Committee upon the Customs on Corn. On the question that the Resolutions of the Committee be read,

SIR J. TYRRELL said, he trusted that he should not be unnecessarily occupying the attention of the House whilst he read a letter which he then held in his hand. He did not wish to delay the business of the evening, and he would best consult the convenience of the House by at once reading the letter. But, in order to explain its contents, he must state that the worthy Alderman the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent, had the other night stated, that, as a member of a corporate body, he had lately let a farm at a very low rate. The impression which the statement of the worthy Alderman had made had been so great upon the right hon. Baronet, that he had cheered it, he might say, vociferously, and hon. Gentlemen opposite had joined in the chorus of applause. As the impression made by the statement had been so great, he felt it his duty to read the letter, which threw a good deal of light upon the statement. He assured the House that he could vouch for the truth of the letter, and if the hon. Baronet who usually sat in that place (Sir R. H. Inglis) had been present, he could have confirmed its accuracy. As it was, he should be happy to show the letter to any hon. Gentleman who communicated with him in private. The letter was from an Essex farmer. Essex farmers had frequently been alluded to during this debate, and this was a letter from one of them. The letter was as follows :—

"I see my friend, Mr. Alderman Copeland, mentioned in the House of Commons on Friday"—

THE SPEAKER: It is against the rule of the House that any hon. Member should read any letter which takes notice of anything said in this House.

SIR. J. TYRRELL: Well then, it has been asserted by Mr. Alderman Copeland, that

—"he, 'as belonging to a corporate body, had lately let a farm in Yorkshire, containing nearly 900 acres, to a farmer from Essex, at an increased rent of 200*l.* per annum: and that he preferred such facts to all the arguments and eloquence on the opposite side.' I am fearful this statement will injure our cause; and as I know the facts of the case, having been requested to look over it for my friend who hired it, I am induced to furnish you with the exact circumstances of the case, and shall feel obliged by your mentioning them as soon as you can in the House of Commons, and you will do our cause much good, as you will find the worthy Alderman has not stated the whole facts of the case. This farm had been let in 1832 at a reduced rent of 200*l.*, making the rent 1,200*l.*, having previously been 1,400*l.* The person who has now hired it did at last agree to give the old rent of 1,400*l.*, the company to whom this property belonged having determined to take no less than that rent. But my friend has now hired it on such conditions as to make the present hiring far preferable to the old one. The landlords are now bound to expend a considerable sum, estimated by their surveyor at about 2,000*l*, in erecting new buildings, fences, &c., to find all tiles for draining, to allow sixty acres of grass to be broken up and converted to arable; and this farm being of a fine rich deep staple, the tenant is also allowed to farm on the five-course system, taking oats after wheat, which the old tenant was debarred from doing. But, above all, a clause is to be inserted in the lease, that in the event of agricultural protection being withdrawn, that the tenant is at liberty to quit the farm by giving

notice—in the event of its operation being to reduce the prices of his produce; and should his landlords not agree to let it to him on such terms as he might feel safe in continuing the occupation, he would be at liberty to leave it."

He regretted that the worthy Alderman was not in his place. Though his statement was not true, it certainly had been well invented. But it was like some faces, which, if you gave them a slight twist, altogether altered their expressions. If the hon. Member for Stockport had been in his place he would have alluded to the case which he had brought forward, and which, he was convinced, rested upon an equally good foundation.

Upon the Resolution with regard to Indian Corn,

Mr. MILES had been in hopes, from the observations of the right hon. Baronet, that a few words would have been introduced with respect to this article, to make it more palatable to the agriculturists of the country. The right hon. Baronet had said, that he would limit the period for the operation of the Treasury order, by which the farmers of England would at once be exposed to the competition of rice and buck-wheat. He objected, upon principle, to the reduction of this duty; but it would withdraw no small share of his opposition if the words, "for a period of three or four months," or of some stated period, were introduced to limit the operation of this reduction. The right hon. Baronet would see that that section of the House were desirous of offering no opposition to the introduction of produce, for the relief of Ireland; but they wanted that a temporary remedy alone should be applied to a temporary evil. Perhaps the right hon. Baronet would state his intentions upon this point, before he proceeded with any general observations he had to offer upon the subject.

Sir R. PEEL: I wish to explain what my proposition is. I propose that by law there should be a permanent reduction of the duty upon Indian maize and corn, and upon buck-wheat and rice; that the duty shall be reduced to a mere nominal amount; and that this shall be the permanent law of the land, and shall take effect as soon as this Bill shall have received the consent of the Legislature and the Royal assent. With respect to buck-wheat, rice, and Indian corn, however, I propose, when the Resolution respecting these articles shall have been reported, to issue a Treasury order, remitting the present legal amount of duty to a nominal rate; such Treasury order to have effect only until the Bill shall have passed both Houses of Parliament and received the Royal assent. By these means we shall leave the duty entirely in the competency of Parliament either to reduce or to continue it; but I cannot consent to alter the determination, by inserting the words suggested by the hon. Member. I propose for the permanent law of the land that the duty upon Indian corn or maize should be reduced to a nominal duty, but that the immediate operation of the measure should be merely temporary.

Mr. MILES: Will there be any personal security?

Sir R. PEEL: No Indian corn will be admitted without the bond of the importer to pay the higher duty, if the change is not sanctioned by Parliament.

Mr. MILES trusted that the right hon. Baronet would forgive him for not having distinctly understood the answer which he had given; but it was most desirable that the matter should be made clear both to the House and to the country. He would now refer to the subject more directly before the House. The properties of Indian corn, or maize, were little understood in this country; but he trusted that the agriculturists of England would now begin to understand them. Maize was in itself, as to its quality, in cereal crops next to wheat. If they took a bushel of maize it was equal to $1\frac{3}{4}$ bushels of barley, and to three bushels of oats. As to nutritive properties, that was the relative proportion between Indian corn and oats and barley. But how did it stand as to wheat? There could be no doubt Indian corn would be used largely instead of barley and oats. He understood from a friend of his, that Indian corn could be brought to the port of Liverpool under 20*s.* per quarter. They were told that competition would have the effect of stimulating agriculture; but the agriculturists would by the present Resolution be placed in this position, that whereas they could compete with foreigners in wheat, barley, and oats, with regard to Indian corn they could carry against him no competition at all. Mr. Cobbett had tried to introduce Indian corn into this country, but, from the temperature, had completely failed. This article appeared to require a temperature of between 75 and 80 in the summer to ripen it. He had tried to cultivate it in the west of England rather largely, but he had only succeeded in ripening the maize once in three years. So it was quite impracticable

for the English farmer to compete with the American grower. The great western States of America as well as the southern were very well adapted for its growth; but what he wanted to inquire was, whether its introduction into this country would only interfere by competing with barley and oats? He said no. It would enter very seriously into competition with wheat. If the House looked to the quantity of wheat consumed in this country and America, they would see how completely it served as a substitute for wheat. There the consumption of wheat was one quarter for each individual, whereas in America each individual merely consumed three and a half bushels. Now, what could be the reason of this? Labour was better—employment more abundant — wages higher — and wheaten bread cheaper than in England. It arose solely from the constant use of Indian corn instead of wheat. It was stated by those who had travelled much in the United States that the greater portion of the population if they had what they called "corn-bread," or bread made from Indian corn, and wheaten bread offered to them, they would prefer the corn-bread. He had been contradicted when he had mentioned the large quantity grown in the United States last year, and from confounding quarters with bushels, he had certainly exaggerated the gross amount; but from a circular from Mr. Martin, dated "Mobile, Nov. 20, 1845," he found that the crop of wheat grown last year in America was 2,500,000 quarters, and that of Indian corn there had been grown no less than 700,000,000 bushels. That amounted to upwards of 87,000,000 quarters. This was the authority for the statement he had previously made. Now, when they looked at the immense quantity produced in the United States, when they remembered that the temperature of that country was particularly fitted for it, and that the temperature of this country did not suit it; that, in America, it was useful in cleansing the land, and that it could be brought into the English market at the price of 20*s.* per quarter, duty paid; they were bound to look at its effect, not only upon oats and barley — much of which it would supersede — but they ought also to look at its effects upon wheat itself. He had been very anxious to learn something relative to the use that could be made of this Indian corn, as an article of food in this country; and he was only sorry that from the data in his possession he was not enabled to inform the House that it could never be made very palatable to an English consumer. He had in his hand a letter giving an account of its preparation for the table, and the following was the manner in which the writer described it:—

"Corn meal is the flour of which I send you a specimen, and when mixed with water, and made into stir about, it is called mush; and done stiff, it is called hommany. Now we pay at New York 100 cents, *i. e.* one dollar (4*s.* 4*d.*) for 100 lbs. of this meal at retail shops. A full half pint weighs half a pound, and that will take up, after the manner of arrow-root, full five times the quantity of water—say two pints and a-half; and when served, it will be as much as four hearty people can eat at one meal. Now this would cost about one halfpenny. To make it palatable the Yankees use molasses, or sugar. I use milk and sugar. Some people use salt. I sent to Sir Robert Peel a couple of pounds of the meal, and a pamphlet showing the quantities that could be procured in the United States, and at 75 cents the cwt., which pamphlet said it could be sold at retail in England, after paying 25 cents more for freight and profit on retailing."

Thus making out exactly what he had stated—that it could be brought into this country at 20*s.* per quarter. He trusted that he had now proved to the House that Indian corn furnished food, not only for the consumption of animals, but also that it was very likely to be used in a great measure for human food, and, of course, would in a certain degree preclude the use of wheat; and, as he had before said, while a certain quantity of wheat was placed in competition with this grain, the effect would be to place the British farmer in this position—that, from the peculiarity of his climate, it would be impossible for him to compete with the foreigner in the growth of this article. It would, therefore, have an additional effect upon the farmer; and, although gentlemen talked of stimulating industry by the competition of free trade, the proposed measures would not have that effect in this particular trade, but would place the farmer under a disadvantage, because, as he had observed, from the peculiarity of our climate, it would be impossible for him to enter successfully into competition with the foreigner. Having made this short statement, it was not his intention at present to divide upon the question, because he considered that there was a general feeling in the House that with the presumed famine in Ireland they should, one and all, whether on the protection benches or the free-trade benches, come forward, and, at any rate, prove to the people there was the same spirit among them to relieve, as far as they were able,

the necessities of the people. He had thought it necessary to make this short statement to show that the effect of the introduction of Indian corn would not be small to the agricultural interest, but that it was necessary, both there and elsewhere, the subject should receive the most earnest consideration; and if it were found that it would be prejudicial to English agriculture he hoped and trusted it would receive due consideration in another place. Although, by possibility, the duty might admit of some reduction—and he was glad to hear an hon. Friend of his say, the other night, that the Americans would be willing to pay a higher duty if Indian corn were brought into consumption—yet he was confident the 1*s.* duty was too low upon an article which was produced in America in immense quantities, and the introduction of which would drive out of profitable cultivation much of the land of this country. He, therefore, entered his protest against the proposition, at the same time thanking the right hon. Baronet for having so far acquiesced in the views of himself and his friends as to make the measure in the first instance only a temporary one.

Mr. CARDWELL said, that he was extremely glad to hear the hon. Member for Somersetshire declare that it was not his intention to divide the House upon this subject. He was sure nobody who had heard from his hon. Friend in the course of the speeches which he had delivered on the propositions of Her Majesty's Government—declarations couched in the strongest and most emphatic language—of his sincere sympathy for that part of the population who were dependent for food on the potato—nobody, he said, who had heard those declarations could have failed to see that they were made in perfect sincerity, and in entire accordance with the general character of his hon. Friend's feelings and conduct. And he himself placing the most perfect reliance upon their sincerity, was extremely glad that, on reflection, his hon. Friend did not think it necessary to divide against the proposition now before the House. For what was the present position of the question? His hon. Friend was influenced by fears which he believed to be exceedingly exaggerated. Notwithstanding the high authorities which his hon. Friend had quoted, he believed it to be incorrect that 700,000,000 bushels of Indian corn were grown in the United States. He would not now enter into particulars—he did not know that it would be right for him to refer to all the details upon which he had occasion to form his opinion; but when his hon. Friend said that Indian corn could be imported into Liverpool at 20*s.* a quarter, duty free, he was convinced that he was giving way to apprehensions and statements which were altogether erroneous, and that the apprehensions which he entertained would admit of being considerably reduced. They all knew that a large portion of the population of Ireland was wholly dependent upon the potato for food; and he was sure gentlemen would agree with him that by their proceedings in that House they would better the condition of the people of Ireland if they could bring them into a habit of depending upon a higher kind of food: if, while they diffused amongst them a taste for a higher kind of food, they could also introduce amongst them habits of industry and improvement calculated to furnish them with the means of procuring that higher food, they would be effecting one of the greatest practical improvements which this country was capable of accomplishing. Even in the most afflicting dispensations of Providence there was ground for consolation, and often even occasion for congratulation. He hoped and trusted that grounds for consolation would be found in the present instance by regarding it as an opportunity for making the people of Ireland desirous of a higher kind of food, and that in future times the present time of trial would be pointed to as an opportunity which had been seized for the accomplishment of a great improvement. That House had already done a great deal by introducing the measures which had been earlier referred to, proposed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government for effecting local improvements in Ireland; but how could those measures be carried out, unless by providing for the Irish people nutriment at a reasonable price; and how could that nutriment be afforded, except through the means now proposed? He would read to the House a description of maize, given in a book which they were accustomed to refer to as an authority—a book written some time ago—and therefore this description could not be supposed to have been introduced for the purpose of the present discussion, In M'Culloch's "Dictionary of Commerce" he found it stated of maize:—

"The straw makes excellent fodder; and the grain as a bread-corn is liked by some; but, though it abounds in mucilage, it contains little

or no gluten, and is not likely to be much used by those who can procure wheaten or even rye bread."

He had that morning received a letter from an individual who, from his official responsibility, had been under the necessity of making himself thoroughly acquainted with that portion of the question relating to Ireland. It should be remarked that the writer of the letter never supposed that his remarks would be used for the purposes of the present debate. The name of the gentleman was Sir R. Routh. He said :—

"We have to obtain favour for this new food at the beginning, which in the end will be the greatest possible boon to Ireland; for I apprehend, as a food, the potato will never be what it has been, nor can the people ever place the same confidence in its growth. It will in time resume its proper station as a vegetable, and cease to be a staple article of food. Thus it appears to me there can be no reasonable competition between corn, meal, and oatmeal."

The hon. Member for Somersetshire would rejoice at the prospect of the people of Ireland being induced, and at the same time enabled to have recourse to a higher species of food; and he could not but feel that any apprehension of the wheat of England suffering from the competition alluded to was wholly unworthy, in importance, to be placed in the scale with the vast social improvement which would accrue to Ireland. A noble Lord had introduced the other evening some specimens of potatoes, grown by Mr. Chapman, of Chiswick, which were exceedingly healthy, though grown from slips of diseased potatoes. From personal inquiries, and from the accounts which he had received, he thought there was more reason to fear, lest diseased potatoes should in the coming year result from slips that had appeared to be sound, than for the hon. Member for Somersetshire to entertain any unfounded expectations that he should be able to replace a large growth of unsound potatoes by propagating sound ones from slips taken from diseased potatoes. He believed that the interposition now necessary under the pressure of an expected famine would not be continued in future years. He believed that the potato would of necessity recede somewhat from the position it had occupied as a staple food, and would take its place as an ordinary vegetable. If this would be done concurrently with enabling the Irish people to occupy themselves upon useful works, and to learn habits of industry, it would be the greater blessing to Ireland; and there were no grounds for apprehending any unseasonable competition of Indian corn meal with the produce of the British agriculturist. The determination of the hon. Member for Somersetshire not to go to a division was a very gracious determination, and one that would be duly appreciated; and in coming to it, he had exercised a most sound discretion.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he had no wish to interrupt the arrangement proposed for the benefit of Ireland; but he wished to disabuse the House of the impression that maize, or Indian corn, would become a substitute for the potato. As to its coming in competition with oats, he could only say that, in the United States, it was universally used in preference.

MR. SHARMAN CRAWFORD wished to remove the impression of hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, that this was a mere temporary infliction which had to be provided for. There were several facts which induced him to believe the contrary. In one neighbourhood, he understood, the potatoes had been diseased ten or twelve years; the disease had appeared in different forms; but, in the year before last, it had assumed that which it now presented; and there was no reason to apprehend that it would be removed speedily. It had always been found that, whenever there was a deficiency of the potato crop in one year, in the next the people were induced to dig them too soon, before they were ripe, and that created this year's scarcity. For this and other reasons, it would be very unwise in the House to expect that they were not called upon to provide for future scarcity. But be that as it might, the greatest blessing that could be conferred upon the people of Ireland would be to furnish a food which would lead them not to look to the potato as their sole resource; nothing would add so much to the prosperity of that country as a supply of food which should be a substitute for the potato. Independently of that, the greatest boon that could be conferred on Ireland would be to give cheap food to the people. If this were not done, the people could not be employed at such wages as would give them the means of purchasing food. They must both employ the people, and furnish them such food as they could not obtain by the result of their labour alone. Plentiful employment and cheap food were the greatest benefits that could be conferred on the people of Ireland; and he anxiously wished to see the

one shilling taken off which was proposed to be levied on Indian corn. Many hon. Gentlemen in that House seemed not to know how the poor of Ireland lived. It had been said, on the late occasion, that 3*d.* a stone was not an extravagant price for potatoes; but, for the great bulk of the Irish people it was a starvation price. If a family, consisting of a man, his wife, and five children, were wholly fed upon potatoes, they would require a bushel a day, which, at 3*d.* a stone, cost 20*d.*, or nearly 11*s.* a week. How then were the people to live, when the average of their wages, as proved by the Commission of Inquiry, was only 2*s.* 4*d.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, unless, by some means or other, they were furnished with cheap food? Those who stood in the way of the people of Ireland getting cheap food were responsible for all their afflictions and miseries, and for the disease and death which were the necessary consequences. He hoped the House would admit this corn free of duty, if possible; but, at any rate, not at a higher duty than that proposed.

Mr. HUME said, he had recently conversed with a gentleman who had travelled in every part of America, and who stated that, notwithstanding every effort had been made there to stop the potato disease, it had gone on for three years; and there was great reason to fear that we should have it for the same period in England. If there was anything he hoped for, it was the very reverse of what was desired by the hon. Member for Somersetshire. He hoped that the Indian corn would come in competition with home-grown corn, and that the people might thus obtain a cheap and wholesome nutriment. He regretted that any opposition should be made to the measure, with the present appearances, not only in Ireland, but along the whole of the west of Scotland, and in the Highlands. It was a most fortunate thing that there was likely to be a quantity of this Indian corn sufficient to avert what might otherwise be a most serious famine; and on that ground he concurred in the desirableness of remitting even the shilling duty.

Colonel SIBTHORP said, that the Irish landowners were to blame for the extremely low rate of wages in that country. With such wages as had been alluded to, no wonder that discontent there prevailed, though the people were naturally kind-hearted and peaceable. The best remedy for the distress of Ireland would be a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, and resident landlords. He deplored the condition of the Irish people as much as any one; but he denied that the measures of Government would alleviate that condition. It appeared, from the statement of the hon. Member for Rochdale, that this was not a temporary evil, but one that had existed for some years. If so, why had not the Government had earlier intimation of it? They ought to know everything that was going on in every county in the kingdom. He could not help thinking that the House ought to pass a censure on the Government for their ignorance of the state of the people of Ireland.

Mr. S. CRAWFORD said, in explanation, that the report made by the Land Commission was the authority on which he founded his belief, that the average wages of the agricultural labourers did not exceed 2*s.* 6*d.* per week.

The Earl of MARCH remarked that it had been stated by the hon. Member for Montrose that the disease in potatoes was not only prevalent in America, but also in Scotland; he begged to inform the hon. Member, that he was able to state, upon the authority of letters received by himself, that in Morayshire and Ayrshire there never had been a more abundant crop, and that there was not the slightest appearance of disease.

Sir A. BROOKE denied that the Irish peasantry were so badly paid for their labour as was generally supposed. There were few of them that did not receive 3*s.* 6*d.*, 4*s.*, 5*s.*, and 5*s.* 6*d.* weekly; and when employed by the gentry they were paid 10*d.* or 1*s.* a day. He was one of those who thought that it would be most desirable that food of a better and higher quality were introduced for the consumption of the Irish population, and he could not speak upon that occasion without thanking Her Majesty's Government and that House for the anxiety that had been so universally expressed on account of the coming scarcity in Ireland, and to make provision for it. At the same time he thought that their present measures would be of little avail, unless they adopted some measures for the general employment of the peasantry. He remembered to have seen oats, the only agricultural produce consumed by the Irish poor, as low as 10*s.* and 11*s.* the quarter; and yet, during the season that the article was at that low price, never was there more poverty and distress. And why? Because the farmers holding 5, 10, 15, or 20 acres, having

little remuneration for their crops, gave but little employment to the peasantry. The peasantry in that case could only hope for employment from the gentry, who looked after their own property. He could say, that at that season the landed gentry of the north of Ireland—for he knew but little of the south—during the months of May, June, and July, employed from 100 to 200 persons extra on their estates, for the purpose of giving them employment. What he wished was, that the Government should give employment to the people. He frankly told them not to have much confidence in the projected railways. He thought that one of the greatest misfortunes for Ireland would be a great number of railways, such as were now being run through all parts of the country. Time would show whether or not his fears were justified. He believed, that if they had had two great trunk lines they would be found to be productive of good; but in the present state of Ireland, it was not in a condition to maintain so many railways as were then Bills for making them going through the other House. It had no great manufactures; it had no means of traffic; it had not the means to maintain, in a profitable condition, the various lines that were about to be carried over its surface. Let them, he said, have peace and quietness, and then they would be able to provide employment for their peasantry. The landed proprietors should put their shoulders to the wheel. It was upon them the Government, that House, and England should call, and insist that they should perform their duty. It was they who should be obliged to pay every shilling they could afford, and he would say at such a moment as this even still more, in order that the poor might be provided with food and employment. He knew that the great body of the landed proprietors of Ireland were well prepared to meet the present exigency, and to provide for the sustentation of the poor on their own property; but there were three classes of landlords who were not so disposed, and yet who ought to be forced to perform their duty. These three classes were the absentees, the middlemen, and the squireens. Yes, the squireens; these were small landed proprietors, with perhaps 500*l.* a year, and who lived at the rate of 5,000*l.* a year. He did not mean that they spent that amount; but they aped the extravagancies, and imitated the habits, and pretended to be able to incur the expenses of men who had 5,000*l.* a year; for they had their hunters and dogs, and aimed at a style which they could not support but by screwing the very last farthing out of their unfortunate tenants. He said, if they wanted to make Ireland prosperous, they must devise the means by which they might reach these three classes. He might remind the House and the Government that it would be well to devise the means by which the Poor Law guardians, in the different districts, might reach these classes; for instance, in the present scarcity, for he did not believe that there would be a famine; but in those districts in which there might be a scarcity, he said, it would be well if Her Majesty's Government could give a power to the Poor Law guardians of laying on extra poor rates, to be paid by the landlords, middlemen, and the absentees. When he talked thus of absentees, he did not wish to be understood as including all absentee landlords as coming under the definition of bad landlords. He knew, for instance, that Lord Fitzwilliam, and the Duke of Devonshire, and other landlords, resident in this country, were amongst the good landlords—as good as resident landlords; but then there were numbers of others who never thought of their tenantry. He could name some of them who had never seen one of their tenants for thirty years; and the consequence was that the resident landlords had to provide for the unfortunate people thus cruelly neglected by those who ought to be their protectors.

MR. P. SCROPE considered that some measures ought to be devised by which they might give to the poor of Ireland the right to relief in the districts in which they resided. He could not help observing that there could, by no possibility, be a scarcity in Ireland, if the food grown in Ireland were left in Ireland. Even since the time that it had been formally announced by the right hon. Gentleman that famine was impending over that country, immense quantities of provisions had been exported from it. Oats might be wanted in Scotland and in the west of England, but assuredly those who had the first right to them were the people by whom they had been produced; they knew that on a former occasion when the people of Ireland were starving, that oats were exported from Ireland to this country, sold here to pay the rents of the Irish landlords, and then returned back to Ireland, when paid for here, to feed the tenants of these same landlords. If the

people here were starving, property would be rated to pay for their support, and he could not see any good reason why this should not be done in Ireland.

Mr. B. ESCOTT thought that the people of Ireland should be provided with cheap food, but it was necessary care should be taken that there were no legislative acts in force by which the food so much wanted was limited. If wages were so low that it was impossible for the best disposed to give more than *5s.* a week to their labourers, that was a sufficient reason why the Government should take care not to raise the price of food. Some observations had been made in the earlier part of the evening respecting the use of Indian corn. He was most happy to think that the labour of introducing this matter had been taken out of his hands. The hon. Member for Somersetshire had supplied all that he himself could have argued upon to the House in favour of letting in a supply of Indian corn. The hon. Gentleman had proved in several statements that Indian corn was a most excellent article of food. He did not dispute his authority. The only difference between them was, that the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) thought that because it was a good article it ought to be kept out of the country; whereas he thought that in consequence of its being a good article it ought to be admitted into the country. He must beg that hon. Gentleman to reflect that not only here, but at that moment in many parts of the United Kingdom, and even in his own county, there was very great apprehension existing of a scarcity of food. It was not only a scarcity of corn, but also a scarcity of meat, which scarcity had been principally caused by the bad fodder of last spring, and winter; but the introduction of Indian corn would remedy that. It had been stated that a large supply of that article could not be brought into use on account of the heavy duty imposed upon it. A large cargo of Indian corn had lately been obliged to be reshipped at one of our ports in consequence of the duty; and while hundreds of our cattle were dying from starvation, that cargo was sent to Holland to feed the Dutch cattle. It had been said, that he had alluded to the feeding of pigs with Indian corn—that he had stated it to be food good only for pigs. He certainly had not stated any such thing; but where an agricultural labourer of the better class, and superior to the poorer parishioners, was enabled to keep a pig, in nine cases out of ten he was obliged to pawn half of the pig before he killed it, to assist him in paying for its food. What a blessing it would be to that man were a cheaper kind of meat introduced for pigs. He could, then, keep the whole animal for himself and family. Nothing would exalt the condition of the agricultural labourer more than having a better supply of animal food than was at present in his power. It would be a great benefit to the agricultural interest, by giving excellent food for fattening stock and geese and poultry. In want and distress Indian corn would also afford a supply of cheap food to the population. But he thought that the extension of trade and commerce, which would follow the present measure, would raise the markets for agricultural produce to an extent which would amply repay them for the temporary reduction on other grains. He would ask what it was that gave a stimulus to agriculture, and raised its condition two or three years ago? It was the increase of employment and the growth of trade and commerce consequent upon the relaxation of the whole commercial system carried at that time in the House of Parliament.

Captain HARRIS said, that he had that day been informed by market gardeners residing in the neighbourhood of London, that the "rot" was showing itself to a considerable degree amongst the young potatoes; and within the last few days he had read a letter, written by a large landed proprietor of the county Clare, which stated that great distress prevailed, and cases of fever had occurred in consequence of the diseased condition of the potato. Under these circumstances, he suggested that a temporary law for the purpose of preventing the exportation of potatoes might be adopted with advantage.

Mr. P. HOWARD considered that the Legislature should be much indebted to the Member for Winchester, for having directed attention to the advantages which would be conferred upon the population of the country by the introduction of Indian corn. He found that Father Mathew had also approved of it as an article of food for the people of Ireland. It was very extensively used in Italy, and especially in Tuscany, the peasantry of which were the best fed and most comfortably clothed in Europe. As to the palatable nature of the food, very much would depend upon the manner of its preparation for use; it would require extreme boiling. He considered Indian corn

next to wheat, and he begged leave to differ from the First Lord of the Treasury, who termed oats a nobler kind of grain.

MR. FITZGERALD begged to state that the deficient payment of the labourer in Ireland did not arise from a want of good will on the part of the landlord, but from the number of people out of employment. He considered that railways in Ireland would be of vast and almost permanent advantage in removing this evil; and he felt no doubt that the country would be most grateful for any benefits bestowed upon them. He did not consider that it would be fair that the whole burden of relieving the poor of their districts should be cast upon the landlords of the absentee estates, as it had been suggested by an hon. Member; but he did consider that they ought to be made to pay their just proportion, and he felt that this visitation of Providence would be the means of restoring the Irish people to their proper position.

MR. G. PALMER said, that it would be impossible for those people to buy Indian corn who could not afford even to purchase oats. The Indian corn would be entirely grown abroad, and paid for by the produce of this country. It was a material point in the question, that every thing would require to be paid for. If they could persuade people to take their goods all would be well. But manufacturers were increasing abroad every day; and they would still, therefore, have to look to the home supply for the maintenance of the people. He thought there were more Members on his side of the House ready and willing to support the people of Ireland, than there were on the Opposition benches and among those who wished for a repeal of the Corn Laws. He was quite satisfied, that if Indian corn were imported into this country, it would be all owing to the alteration of the Tariff of the right hon. Baronet. He was sure every Member of that House would agree to afford relief to the Irish people. How could the labourers in that country provide for their families upon two shillings and sixpence a week? It was hardly possible for them to buy even straw to lie upon with so small a sum. He thought that, were they to construct railways through Ireland, it would improve the country directly. Any alteration must be for the better. There would be no fear of the people wanting food if proper employment were found them.

MR. PIERCE BUTLER observed, that several remarks had been made in the course of this debate which led him to believe that there was a very erroneous impression in the minds of certain hon. Members with respect to the rate of wages usually awarded to Irish labourers. He begged leave to remark, for the information of the House, that in the southern counties of Ireland able-bodied labourers were usually paid at the rate of *5s.* or *6s.* a week. Eightpence a day was not unfrequently the rate of remuneration enjoyed by labourers of an inferior class; but, generally speaking, there were other extraneous advantages which were highly valuable; such, for instance, as a house rent-free, or grass for a cow. With respect to the Minister's proposition for the introduction of maize duty free, he approved highly of it, and would give it his most cordial support.

SIR JOHN RAE REID observed, that there was no portion of the Ministerial project of which he did not cordially approve; and it would, accordingly, afford him the sincerest pleasure to support it. He had always held the doctrine, that the interests of the agricultural and manufacturing classes in this country were identical; and it was because he knew this to be the fact, that he gave to the propositions of the First Lord of the Treasury his warm and unhesitating assent; for he was confident that those propositions, if carried into operation, would prove in the highest degree beneficial to the best interests of agriculturists as well as of the manufacturers. He implored of hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House not to protract this discussion by unnecessary delays; for he spoke advisedly when he assured them that he had the highest possible authority for asserting that trade had in many districts of England suffered most injuriously from the state of uncertainty in which this question had been permitted to rest for such a length of time. He besought them as they valued the welfare of the agricultural and commercial interests — in both of which he had himself a deep personal concern—to come to a decision at once. By the vote which he had given on this question, he was well aware that he had made for himself many enemies; but he was far from regrettting the course he had taken, for that course he had adopted under the strongest possible conviction that he was doing what was best calculated to promote the wealth,

happiness, and prosperity of this great Empire. He anticipated the happiest results from the new commercial policy about to be adopted by England; and he was sure that before that time twelve months many of the hon. Members by whom he was surrounded would feel and admit that the opposition which they were now offering to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government was unnecessary, to say the least of it.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that no question raised during these discussions was more deserving the attention of the House than the allusions made to the present condition of the people of Ireland, and to the prospects eventually before them; and if there were no other arguments to show that the Government, in the present circumstances of the country, had adopted the wisest policy in abolishing all restrictions on the introduction of provisions into the country, that argument would be found in what had been stated by hon. Gentlemen as to the condition of the population in Ireland; Indian corn was likely to afford valuable subsistence for them, and to raise the people from the lowest condition, caused by their habitually living on potatoes. He would not make any predictions of what might be the result; but experience showed how the habits of a people might change by a more generous diet. So far as maize should be adopted for potatoes, it must be a beneficial substitute as well in England as in Ireland: though when wheat was at a reasonable price, he did not think it would be superseded by Indian corn. Having been in the Western States of America, he should say that, though maize was palatable and liked by the people, yet when he got to the wheat-growing districts, the general diet was not Indian corn. Upon that occasion he was only anxious to say one word as to the measure of Government in laying out, as he understood, 100,000*l.* in the purchase of Indian corn for use in Ireland. He did not presume to blame the course taken by the Government. He admitted that under special circumstances, and for the relief of local, not general, distress, the Government might go into the market and make a purchase; but at the same time, that principle ought to be carried out with the utmost caution. Some Gentlemen said that there were plenty of oats, and asked why the Government did not enter the market and purchase them? Nothing, however, could be more fatal than for a Government to appear in the markets of their own country as purchasers. The admirable principles laid down by Burke, in his *Thoughts on Scarcity*, could never be departed from without mischief; it was fatal to teach the people to rely on the Government for food. Sharing in the wish that there should be no unnecessary delay in passing the Resolution, and in relieving trade from the sad state of uncertainty under which it had laboured for some weeks, and which had produced an unfortunate effect in the manufacturing and commercial districts, it would be inexcusable in him to detain the House longer; and he had only risen to state his satisfaction at finding the Government propose the only real policy which would in the long run improve the condition of the people of this country, by laying open the avenues of commerce, and by allowing a supply of food to be brought in in such a manner as the course of trade, which was truly said to be the course of nature, would arrange; and he thought the proposal especially valuable, because it added an article to our imports which was inferior only to the noblest of all grains—wheat. He regretted to say that, of late years, he had seen the people of the west of England, and particularly in West Somersetshire, becoming more and more a potato-fed population. He would be glad to rescue them from this downward tendency in their physical habits and moral condition; and, anticipating the happiest results from the Government measures, he should continue to give, as he had already given, them his hearty support.

Mr. FINCH said, that however true it might be that the population of the country should not look to the Government for a supply of food, that abstract principle must be thrown aside when necessity demanded a supply; and he considered that the Government were perfectly warranted and justified in importing a quantity of Indian corn to meet the emergency. With respect to that commodity becoming a substitute for wheat or potatoes, that was, in his opinion, perfectly absurd, as they did not know but before the end of the present year they would be at war with America; and in case that should occur, of course their supply would be instantly stopped. Therefore, he said, it would be an unwise policy to attempt to induce the population of the country to give up their usual food, and depend upon a supply of a different description, that might be stopped at any moment. With respect to what had been

said, as to the downward course of depending altogether upon potatoes, however true that might be, he was strongly of opinion that the introduction of any other species of food would not put a stop to their use amongst the Irish people. He considered that the quantity of foreign grain that might be introduced into the country would affect the agricultural interests; yet he had no objection to any temporary importation of maize or other commodity to meet the pending emergency. With regard to the remark of the right hon. Baronet who sat behind him, as to the necessity that existed for the debate being concluded, in order that the importations should take place immediately, he was of opinion that that question should be discussed freely, as every night that it continued some additional evidence was given of important matters that should be known to the country.

LORD G. BENTINCK was understood to say, that he thought if proper steps had been taken in time, a great deal of the mischief that had occurred in the potato crops in Ireland might have been remedied. He had received a report of a number of experiments that had been recently made by the gardener to the Duke of Portland, which, with the permission of the House, he would read for the benefit of those who might hereafter have their potato crops affected by disease. His Lordship read as follows:—

"No. 1, kiln-dried according to the recommendation of the Government professors—nearly all rotten; a few eyes have sprouted, but very weak. No. 2, and according to the plan recommended by Mr. Reece, of Piccadilly, *i. e.*, fumigated with chlorine gas, not quite so bad as No. 1, there being more in a vegetating state, but the shoots very weak. No. 3, dried with magnesian quicklime in layers—the potatoes are quite sound, and where the eyes have sprung are healthy. No. 4, cured with charcoal dust in layers—sound; eyes not so much grown as No. 3, but healthy. No. 5, cured with burnt clay and peat—a good many diseased, but where the eyes have sprung are healthy. The potatoes planted in pots in the hothouses for experiment were numbered as follows:—Lot, No. 1, cured according to the plan of Mr. Reece, *i. e.* fumigated with chlorine gas, did not vegetate; Lot, No. 2, kiln-dried, according to the professors' plan, did not vegetate; Lot, No. 3, dried with magnesian quick lime are quite healthy, the stalks and leaves not the least affected, but being late potatoes the young tubers are not large enough yet to show any trace of disease; twelve pots of the same sort of potatoes, much diseased, but with no preparation, were planted at the same time: a few vegetated, and are growing strong, and no sign of the disease spreading on the stalks or young tubers."

The person who had made these experiments had told him that all the early potatoes looked as well, as if not better, than they usually did at this season of the year; but they would not be ready before the end of March; and he further stated that he had no reason to think that the diseased potato-seed would produce diseased potatoes; and he also mentioned that he had heard that the disease had not extended much within the last three months; the only loss that had taken place was, where the potatoes had been pitted in a wet state, and not looked to. He had also received from the same person a remedy for curing potatoes that were diseased by means of quick lime, which he would also read to the House. It was as follows:—

"The following was the result of the magnesian lime upon two loads of the very worst potatoes they could pick out at the farm—they were spread out on the floor of a peach house, and the stench was quite disagreeable, a great many being in a state of putrefaction. Having dusted them all over with a coat of lime newly slacked, next day the lime took nearly all the smell away, and brought a deal of water out of the worst. We kept dusting some fresh every day, till the rotten part was converted into starch, the solid parts dried and turned quite green. I put them all into a ridge, and on looking at it yesterday I found the eyes of many had sprung, and were forming fine healthy shoots, some of them four inches long, and quite white."

He (Lord George Bentinck) thought these important pieces of information; and therefore he took leave to read them to the House, as he thought it desirable that they should be read to the country. He knew that the quantity of lime that it would be necessary to expend upon potatoes that were diseased would cost about 6*d.* a sack; and in ordinary times potatoes sold at about 4*s.* 6*d.* or 5*s.* a sack. Thus, if potatoes were diseased, by the expenditure of 6*d.* a sack they could be saved, and therefore it was a piece of information that he thought should be extended to Ireland and other parts of the country. An hon. Member had stated that by the introduction of maize into this country, a person who had formerly been able to keep one pig would be able to keep two. He inquired how that could be, as the highest duty that could be demanded at any time upon maize was 11*s.*, and the original cost of that commodity was 20*s.*? He could not see, therefore, how a farmer would, by the removal of 11*s.* duty off a 20*s.* article, be enabled to feed double the quantity of stock at the same expense as one-half had cost him when paying that amount of duty.

Resolutions agreed to, and Bills ordered to be brought in.

The House resolved itself into Committee on the Customs' and Corn Importation Acts, to consider the remainder of the Articles on the Tariff. The following were agreed to:—

	£.	s.	d.
Bandstring Twist, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Barley, Pearled, the cwt	0	1	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	0	6
Bast Ropes, Twines, and Strands, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Beads, viz.			
—— Arango, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Coral, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Crystal, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Jet, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— not otherwise enumerated or described, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Beer or Mum, the barrel	1	0	0
Blacking, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0

Mr. EWART said, that the duty on foreign books was a subject in which he felt a very deep interest, since it was intimately connected with the diffusion of literature in this country. The duties at present levied on foreign books were of a very anomalous description. In the first place, a distinction of duty was drawn between books printed before the year 1801, and books printed subsequently. The former were admitted at a duty of 1*l.* the cwt. Of books printed since 1801, those in foreign modern languages were taxed with a duty of 2*l.* 10*s.* the cwt. All other foreign books paid the large duty of 5*l.* a cwt. The result of this was, that foreign works in the dead languages paid the highest duty; modern books in living languages the next; and old books of the last century (which we wanted least) entered at the lowest duty. Next came works containing engravings to illustrate the text. They paid a twofold duty; one on the book, another on the engravings. The latter, indeed, was only 1*d.* per engraving, coloured or plain. But it induced the great disadvantage, if not danger, of causing the opening of the books at the Custom-house. It was well known that foreign works on botany, physiology, zoology, and medicine, suffered greatly from this circumstance; and to trade it produced this disadvantage, that much delay was interposed between their arrival and their delivery at the Custom-house. Another evil connected with the present system was, that when books had once been abroad, they were often stopped on their re-importation into this country. He thought these impediments to literature and commerce were a serious injury to the country. All men must have witnessed with pleasure the extended literary intercourse which had lately taken place between this country and various nations on the Continent. Any impediment to that intercourse must be admitted to be a serious evil. Why should we not avail ourselves of the literature of our enlightened neighbours the French? There were certain works of a comprehensive nature which they had produced which we had not. Mr. M'Culloch had said, for example, that such a work as the "*Biographie Universelle*," the result of the combined labours of many minds, could scarcely be produced in England. It was well known that the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge had endeavoured to achieve the publication of a Biographical Dictionary, and that they were not able to complete the undertaking. Mr. M'Culloch named also another valuable work, which he doubted if we could produce in England. It was the well known work entitled "*L'Art de vérifier les Dates.*" The same remark had also been made as to the two octavo editions of Bayle's Dictionary. Then why not also develop the taste for German literature, which was springing up in this country? No German author was more likely to be popular in England than Schiller, founded as his writings were on the school of Shakspeare; yet such was the effect of the duty, that the best German edition of Schiller's works cost 24*s.*; whereas the cost, without the duty, would be only 17*s.* There were also a variety of German school-books which were produced in Germany cheaper than in England. Our best Greek grammars were only translations of German grammars; such were the well-known grammars of Matthiæ and of Buttmann. The smaller editions of the classical authors were also produced in Germany at a cheap rate. A pocket edition of Herodotus, for example, which was now sold in this country for 4*s.*, might be sold, if the duty were taken off, at 2*s.* 3*d.* to the trade, and at 3*s.* or less, to the general purchaser. The same remark was applicable to the small editions of the Greek dramatists. In fact, each of these small volumes without the duty would be saleable at 1*s.* They were well printed,

and were particularly correct. But, perhaps, it might be said that we could not compete in editions of the Classics, with the foreign publisher, because of the excise duty on paper. Such an argument, however, would not apply to the Universities, English, Scotch, or Irish. They were all allowed a drawback on the paper they consumed in printing. The cheapest edition that had been published of "Lindorff's Greek Dramatists" (a work of which Professor Gaisford had spoken with great praise) was an Oxford reprint of the German edition. It had, he believed, sold to a greater extent even than the German edition itself; a fact which certainly gave good ground for hoping that our press could compete successfully with that of any foreign country. The Universities only could compete, because the Universities only had the benefit of the allowance of the duty on paper. His reply was, "Levy then only such a duty on foreign books generally as is equivalent to the duty on paper." But it might be said that the duty on books was necessary to the revenue. Now, what did the duty produce? 14,000*l.* or 15,000*l.* a year. Such trifling duties ought not to obstruct the extension of literature, and the enlightenment of the people. He therefore moved, in the first place, that—

"Books printed in any modern foreign language be admitted duty free."

The Question was put that the words be inserted.

SIR G. CLERK admitted that it was extremely desirable that the object of the Motion should be accomplished; but there were other consideratins involved as well as the loss of revenue, which would be 10,000*l.* It was highly desirable that there should be an interchange of literature between this country and foreign nations; but there was another object also to be kept in view—namely, the suppression of piratical editions of English books on the Continent and in other countries. About two years ago an Act of Parliament (7 and 8 Vic.) had been passed for the purpose of enabling Her Majesty to enter into arrangements with foreign States for the purpose of suppressing literary piracy: in that Act power was given to Her Majesty to reduce the duty on books printed in such States as entered into a treaty of international copyright with England, to the amount of the excise duty upon paper—viz., to 15*s.* per cwt. That Act applied to works printed in the dead or the living languages. At the present moment, there were negotiations pending on the subject of an international copyright treaty with Prussia and France: those negotiations had already made great progress, and would, he trusted, soon be satisfactorily concluded. At no very distant time, therefore, he trusted that the advantages sought to be obtained by the Motion of the hon. Member would be obtained by these means: while at the same time the additional advantage to the English author and publisher would be derived of the suppression of piratical editions of English works in two of the principal publishing nations of the Continent. Under these circumstances, although, as he had stated, he agreed that the duty on foreign books should be removed from the Tariff as soon as possible, he trusted the hon. Member would not press his Motion.

MR. HUME suggested that his hon. Friend should withdraw his Motion, at the same time expressing it as his intention to vote for it if it went to a division.

MR. FORSTER said, that the question of copyright had nothing whatever to do with the repeal of the duty on foreign printed books in living or dead languages. He did not see why it should be mixed up with the Motion. There was no earthly reason why the foreign student in this country should be debarred from the necessary books, not even that of protection to existing establishments.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER suggested that, as the Act for the establishment of international copyright had only been so very recently passed, and as the Government were on the point of concluding treaties with two great Powers upon the subject, it would not be advisable to throw away the advantage that might be derived by the literary men of this country, by proceeding to a step which would have the effect of rendering the negotiations that had taken place nugatory.

MR. C. BULLER could not see why the question of copyright should be mixed up with the Motion of his hon. Friend, whose object was to obtain a remission of the duty upon foreign books. He approved most fully of the provisions of the Act referred to by the right hon. Baronet (Sir G. Clerk), which provided that copyright should be made the subject of international treaties, so as to afford security to authors in this and other countries. He considered the tax on foreign books pressed very heavily upon a class of the community who were, from their situation in life, very

poor, and who were thus deprived of the means of prosecuting their own studies, and extending literature in this country. It had been stated by the right hon. Baronet that treaties were in progress on this subject between Prussia, France, and this country; but it must be remembered that there were other nations with which it might not be so easy to effect an arrangement. A great many books were printed in the smaller German States, in Italy, and in Switzerland; and he thought it was most desirable that those publications should be accessible to students in this country, without being subject to a heavy and oppressive duty. He hoped Her Majesty's Government would take the present opportunity of remitting so onerous a tax.

MR. DISRAELI: The question was, was it proper to admit foreign literature free of duty? He should like to know what was the whole amount of revenue derived from this tax, and whether that amount would justify legislative interference. He rather thought there was no duty on English works when they entered France. He thought the very fact of introducing the question of copyright showed a great immaturity of thought. It had, he repeated, nothing to do with it. He wanted to know, taking a *primâ facie* view of the case—*primâ facie* views were very popular at present—what argument could possibly be introduced to sustain the present imposition of duties. The impost did not come into competition with any branch of native industry; no branch of industry was in danger of suffering from their free importation. In short, there was every inducement to enlightened public men to accede to the Motion. Upon other questions he could understand a desire to keep up revenue, either for maintaining revenue, for protection, or from other motives of policy; but at the moment that the public mind and the mind of the Government was brought to the remission of tariff on some of those articles most essential to the revenue, he thought that for any Minister to propose to raise a duty on foreign literature was absurd, monstrous, and indefensible, in fact, quite a "curiosity of literature." The system of reciprocity so much insisted on by hon. Gentlemen should surely be adopted in this matter, where no interest could suffer, and where the improvement of the human mind might be promoted and encouraged. He really thought the Government would feel the absolute necessity of not pressing their opposition to the measure.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that he was quite delighted with the speech of the hon. Gentleman, for he now wished to deal with the question in a *primâ facie* view, while the whole of his argument the other night was that they should do nothing without looking to reciprocity. The House should recollect that negotiations were now being carried on under the faith of an Act of Parliament passed so lately as 1844, in which inducements were held out to foreign countries to enter into treaties with this country on the subject of copyright. He trusted that it would not be thought expedient to abandon the advantages we might obtain under that treaty.

MR. DISRAELI said, that with respect to reciprocity, of which the right hon. Gentleman had spoken, he would accept the *tu quoque*. He was quite glad to find the right hon. Gentleman the advocate of reciprocity, and hoped it would be the harbinger of a new system; so that when they came to the next debate they would find that the Cabinet, taking advantage of the three days, would review their policy. He had only spoken of the question under discussion, which had nothing to do with the main question. He thought so still. It had nothing to do with foreign or native copyright. The best thing the Government could do was to accede to the Motion of the hon. Member. He would be certainly glad to find Ministers, upon every other occasion, ready to accept his views and principles respecting reciprocity, which he would be always found ready and willing to vindicate.

MR. P. SCROPE stated that it had been observed by some hon. Member that no foreign books were printed in this country, and that, therefore, there was no competition to fear; but a great many English books were printed abroad at a much less price than they could be in this country, in consequence of the charge of copyright. If they repealed the duty on foreign books altogether, there would be no inducement to pass those reciprocal treaties for the protection of copyright and for the prevention of the printing of piratical editions of English works.

MR. BORTHWICK said, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not informed them whether the duty was to be imposed for the sake of protection or of revenue. He thought the question of protection had been disposed of by the hon. Member who had just sat

down; and as to the question of revenue, he would ask was it fair, on account of a sum of 10,000*l.*, to refuse to the people of this country the benefit of the knowledge to be derived from a free introduction of foreign literature?

SIR G. CLERK said, the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope) had very fairly stated the principle on which the Government proposed to act. It was extremely desirable for the interests of literature that this country should take every possible means to secure for her authors copyright in foreign conntries. This country could not produce pirated foreign works, as they could not be published cheaper here than in foreign countries, and therefore the entire benefit of an international copyright regulation would devolve on this country alone. Consequently the only equivalent which England could offer to foreign countries for such an arrangement would be the admission of their works at a duty amounting merely to the excise duty on the paper used; and if the Motion of the hon. Member were agreed to there would thus be but little chance of inducing foreign countries to agree to the arrangement which they proposed.

MR. B. HOPE could not see that this question had anything to do with copyright. He was anxious to see the elaborate and splendidly illustrated foreign works introduced into this country, partly, perhaps, from a selfish motive, for he had been purchasing several such works lately at a great expense; but partly, also, with a view of shaming our own literati, whose attempts in this way were utterly disgraceful as compared with those on the Continent. He should support the Motion of the hon. Member for Dumfries, if he made it clear before they went to a division, that his proposition did not extend to the introduction of the piratical editions of English works.

MR. HAWES said, the Motion of his hon. Friend (Mr. Ewart) distinctly referred to the admission of foreign books published in foreign languages, and the question of piracy of the works of British authors did not at all arise under it.

MR. CARDWELL said, he did not see why there should necessarily be any confusion arise from two distinct ideas being considered together. It was quite true that the duty on the importation of foreign books, and the question of copyright, were two distinct matters. The former was interesting to foreign countries, and the latter was chiefly important to this country. The Government simply proposed to foreign countries, "If you assist us in preventing the printing the pirated editions of the works of English authors by your publishers, we in return will remove the duties now chargeable on your books entering our country." The Act of Parliament passed two years ago was intended to effect this purpose; and he thought his right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Board of Trade exercised a sound discretion in not interfering with the provisions of a Statute so recently enacted.

MR. AGLIONBY agreed with the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Cardwell), that there was no confusion arising from the two subjects being considered conjointly. What he wanted to know was, whether the principle which they had followed on this subject two years ago were to be still acted upon? He thought the policy of this Session was entirely different from the principles of reciprocity for which the Government contended in regard to this question. If his hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries did divide the House on his Motion, he (Mr. Aglionby) would certainly vote with him; though it was, perhaps, a question whether it would be wise or discreet to proceed to a division upon it.

MR. DISRAELI thought the hon. Secretary of the Treasury had put the question in a fair light; but he thought he had not properly stated the case. He, for instance, could understand the principle that Molière should be introduced into Dover, and Shakespeare into Boulogne, both duty free. But he was still of opinion that nothing could be more indiscreet than to mix up the question of permitting Molière to come into England with a guarantee to English authors that their works should not be printed in foreign countries in the English language. There was not the slightest analogy between the two cases. He would say for himself, not arrogantly, for he was scarcely an English author—but it was just and right that an English author should be protected in his own country. He had the same claim to that which other gentlemen had to be protected in their lands and houses; undoubtedly, therefore, it was right to give protection to English authors in their own country. But hon. Gentlemen entertained ulterior views of increasing the enjoyment of his property to an English author. Now he thought, as he had always thought, that

these were ultra views. It was next to impossible that they could suppose an English author would be permitted to enjoy the advantages of his English property in a foreign country, even though reciprocal treaties were framed. It might be, as Mr. Clay said of free trade, a beautiful theory, but it could not be brought about in practice. But suppose that by the progress of reason and civilization this magnificent theory could be realized, what had that to do with miserable ideas of bargain and sale, advanced by the hon. Secretary to the Treasury. To suppose that foreign nations would accord this magnificent homage to genius for the sake of a few thousand pounds more or less received at the Custom-house, was so absurd and ridiculous that he would not waste another word in exposing it. They had already given the English author sufficient protection in his own country. Well, but it was imagined that he could obtain a greater advantage than he at present possessed—an advantage which he (Mr. Disraeli) thought he was not entitled to possess by extending that copyright to foreign countries; but all would agree that at present there was not much probability of obtaining it. In the absence of that probability they come to the practical point—should the great body of the English people be precluded from receiving at a moderate rate the works of foreign authors printed in foreign languages?—for he quite agreed that the hon. Member for Dumfries should make his Motion more explicit. With regard to the phrase "confusion of ideas," when he made use of it, he used the first phrase that occurred to him; but he must say that subsequent reflection had not convinced him that he was not justified in using it. He thought there was still confusion of ideas, and that nothing but confusion of ideas had let to the mixing up of these two questions. The question was simply this—whether the people of this country should receive free of duty the works of foreign authors in a foreign language? And to meet that question as it has been met, by quoting a rigmarole Act of Parliament which was based on principles of reciprocity, that Her Majesty's Government had since elaborately repudiated—principles which in this case he thought were repugnant to common sense and common justice—was a position which the House ought not to support them in maintaining.

Dr. BOWRING said, if ever there was a case in which the House was bound to give effect to the principles of the right hon. Baronet, this was that case. This country would derive great benefit from the introduction of foreign books, whilst we should be affording an admirable example to other nations.

Mr. WILLIAMS admitted the principle involved in the proposition of the hon. Member for Dumfries; but he did not think the reduction would be any great advantage, because it was only the richer classes who bought foreign books, to whom a saving of 2*d.* or 3*d.* a volume was of no importance.

Mr. CURTEIS was astonished that one of the professed advocates of free trade should have brought forward these harassing Motions; and he could only say, if he was the right hon. Baronet, and he was put into a minority on this question, he would throw up the whole concern at once. The hon. Member was a member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and it was inconsistent in him now to bring forward a Motion which would probably place a free-trade Government in a minority.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for the spirit in which he has spoken of me; but at the same time I beg to assure that hon. Gentleman, that I knew well, in undertaking the task which I have undertaken, that I would have many difficulties to contend with. At the same time, it is a great object to bring these matters to a conclusion; and if I am in a minority to-night, the hon. Gentleman may depend upon it that I will not be influenced by such considerations. Neither that nor any other minor difficulty shall induce me to relax my exertions to bring these great questions of commercial policy to a satisfactory issue. That, Sir, is the main object which at present I have in view. At the same time, I do hope that those hon. Gentlemen who concur generally in the policy of the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government, who wish to see these great and comprehensive measures fairly carried out, will support me on this occasion. It would now be wise in them not to insist on their own views. I can easily conceive that in dealing with 300 articles many persons may be of opinion that on this or on that article the Government have gone too far, or not gone far enough; but if you are satisfied, first, that there is extreme difficulty in dealing with so many articles, and second, if you generally approve of the whole measure as

one comprehensive plan, I hope hon. Gentlemen will be content to support it; unless they entertain a strong persuasion to the contrary, or the wisdom of their policy in the particular course be clearly demonstrated. I hope they will rather look to this measure as a whole, than embarrass the Government by opposing it on particular questions. It has been said that the loss to the revenue in this case would be altogether unimportant. Now, I say, that if we had a large surplus, the consideration of 10,000*l.* ought not perhaps to weigh with us. At the same time, I must state that the reductions which will be proposed in the present Session, with the equivalents that are to accompany them, will materially reduce this surplus; and if in every case of the Tariff hon. Gentlemen are to rise and say this is only a question of 10,000*l.* and if considerations of particular cases are to overbear questions of revenue, then the surplus which still remains will be altogether destroyed. There are many articles in the Tariff which, if we looked to the duties abstractedly, I confess that I do not know any ground for maintaining them. Take for instance, the case of butter and cheese. It is for the sake of the revenue that we continue the duties on these articles, that revenue amounting to 300,000*l.* a year; and it is at considerable risk that we have agreed to reduce the duty from 20*s.* to 10*s.* But if you take butter and cheese abstractedly from considerations of revenue, I think as good a case might be made out for the exemption of these articles from duty as for corn. Therefore, it is impossible to exclude altogether considerations of revenue; and if you do admit these considerations, do not allow the consideration that it is only 10,000*l.* to be a sufficient argument; because it is these several small duties that make up the gross revenue. I admit that in the case of foreign literature, if foreign countries had acted as they have done in commercial treaties—if they had been disinclined to propose such treaties—I am not prepared to say that the principle now under consideration ought not to be adopted with regard to international literature. But, in point of fact, such treaties are now pending both with France and Prussia; and I will add, that if treaties of reciprocity can be entered into with foreign countries, the interchange of reciprocal benefits will be a great argument for regulating our own duties. It would be an additional motive for us to reduce the duty on the introduction of French brandies into this country, if France at the same time reduced her duties upon our hardware, either by treaty or by mutual arrangement. It is only because we have continued these attempts for the last ten or fifteen years, and have made no progress, that we at last came to the resolution that we would exclusively study our own advantages; and that we would no longer injure the people of this country by debarring them from foreign articles, because foreign countries would not enter into reciprocal treaties with us. If the cause of literature depended on this, I am not to say you ought not to adopt this principle. But there are treaties with France and Prussia, and if the good effect of this measure can be extended, and thereby protect the authors of this country against those who contribute nothing, I think it should. Surely the hon. Gentleman does not mean to injure the English author or bookseller by admitting books entirely free; when books printed in this country on paper manufactured by English manufacturers pay the excise duty? [Mr. EWART: No, I would not.] In England, if a bookseller publish a foreign book—say a German grammar—whether a translation or not, he must pay the excise duty upon the paper of which the volume is composed; and surely the hon. Member would not allow a German grammar, published abroad, to be brought into this country without paying the duty? A noble Friend of mine, who perhaps is in the House at the present moment, published an historical work in France—the *Life of Condé*. [Mr. EWART: Only 100 copies were printed.] Well, without any example, the injustice is clear enough. Considering the pendency of negotiation, and the possibility of an arrangement being effected, I hope the House will not press this alteration in the Tariff.

MR. GISBORNE thought the proposition of the hon. Member (Mr. Ewart) too crude to divide the House upon it, and that he would better consult the interests of free trade by resting satisfied with the credit of the present discussion. He therefore advised the hon. Gentleman not to divide, but withdraw the Motion.

MR. WYSE said, it was the duty of the House to give every inducement to the introduction of foreign literature; and he remarked that he had often derived more information upon our own learning and literature from German writers than from our own. It was nearly the same as to Italian. With the exception of Dante, Pe-

trarch, and some others of the poets, there was not a hundredth part of the Italian writers whose works reached this country. It happened, too, that those who most wished to read them were poor, and the proposition would therefore be a great boon to that numerous class. But, taking into consideration the fact that the right hon. Baronet was not unfavourable to the introduction of foreign literature, he would also recommend his hon. Friend to withdraw the proposition.

Mr. EWART was impressed with the conviction that it would be impossible to oppose this reduction for a long period; and being convinced that it must come under the consideration of the Government in the course of next year, and that at the present moment he should be able only to carry a portion of it—considering also that he was a friend to the general measure of the right hon. Baronet—knowing, too, that it must be carried next year if not this—and fully satisfied that this question had now gained a victory, he would postpone the Motion.

Mr. DISRAELI was not surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should have been satisfied with the moral victory upon which he had congratulated himself; and he only hoped that Her Majesty's Government would consider that there was very little chance of their being in a minority until the "great and comprehensive" measure was passed. It might be accident the other night, when the House was interested in a subject of great national interest, that, for a moment, feeling there were duties without the walls of that House of a paramount nature, they fulfilled their office, and Her Majesty's Government were in a minority. He was sure that would not happen again. He was sure that hon. Gentlemen opposite would instantly rise and assure Her Majesty's Government there was not the slightest apprehension until the "great and comprehensive measure" had passed, of Her Majesty's Ministers ever being in a minority. He therefore relied upon it that in Committee they would be spared the sacrifice of the right hon. Baronet, who, at the last moment, when the battle was lost, had put on his armour, and, like a Paladin, rushed to the fray, bringing Ithuriel's spear to the combat, as his only weapon, saying that his Government was not a Government that subsisted for party but for posterity. "Posterity" would prove a very grand principle, until the "great and comprehensive measure" was passed. Yet there were persons out of doors who would regret that the House of Commons, with a majority sympathizing with the question at issue, should have felt it necessary to vote against their convictions, in order to save a Government to which they were opposed. Such was the happy state of English politics at present. He (Mr. Disraeli) congratulated the hon. Member upon a position which he must feel to be quite heroic; and he congratulated Her Majesty's Government upon their extremely agreeable situation. The House had heard almost all the Cabinet, and some of the most celebrated subalterns, and they had induced the House, with a majority against them, not to divide; and people might rise next morning, and know that they were not to be allowed to buy a foreign book, however splendid the style or brilliant the genius, because Her Majesty's Government had been in danger from the Opposition which sat before them, and which, while pretending to oppose, were only assisting them to that which he (Mr. Disraeli) believed would be their ruin.

Colonel SIBTHORP said, that no doubt the hon. Member for Dumfries (Mr. Ewart) was very much disappointed that the two clerkships for the Treasury were filled up. If, however, the hon. Member persevered and continued to act as he had just done, he might yet perhaps succeed to one of them.

Amendment withdrawn.

The following Articles were agreed to:—

Brass, manufactures of, for every 100*l.* value	£10	0	0
—— Powder of, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Brocade of Gold or Silver, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Bronze, manufactures of, not particularly enumerated, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Powder, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Buck Wheat Meal, the cwt.	0	0	4½
Butter, the cwt.	0	10	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Buttons, Metal, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Cameos, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Candles, viz.—			
—— Spermaceti, the lb.	0	0	3
—— Stearine, the lb.	0	0	1½
—— Tallow, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Wax, the lb.	0	0	2
Canes, Walking Canes or Sticks mounted, painted, or otherwise ornamented, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Carriages of all sorts, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Casks, empty, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Cassava Powder, the cwt.	0	2	6
—— of and from a British possession. the cwt.	0	0	6

Catlins, for every 100*l.* value	£10	0	0
Cheese, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	1	6
China or Porcelain Ware, painted or plain, gilt or ornamented, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Cider, the tun	5	5	0
Citron, preserved in salt, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Clocks, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Copper manufactures not otherwise enumerated or described, and Copper Plates engraved, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Copper or Brass Wire, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Cotton, articles or manufactures of Cotton, wholly or in part made up, not otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Crayons, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Crystal, cut or manufactured, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Cucumbers, preserved in salt, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	2	10	0
Fish cured, not otherwise enumerated, the cwt.	0	1	0
Gauze of Thread, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Hair, manufactures of Hair or Goats' Wool and any other material, and articles of such manufacture, wholly or in part made up, not particularly enumerated, or otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Hams of all kinds, the cwt.	0	7	0
—— of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	0
Harp Strings, or Lute Strings, silvered, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Hats or Bonnets, viz.—			
—— of Chip, the lb.	0	3	6
—— of Bast, Cane, or Horsehair Hats or Bonnets, each Hat or Bonnet not exceeding twenty-two inches in diameter, the dozen	0	7	6
—— each Hat or Bonnet exceeding twenty-two inches in diameter, the dozen	0	10	0
—— Straw Hats or Bonnets, the lb.	0	5	0
Hats, Felt, Hair, Wool, or Beaver Hats, each	0	2	0
—— made of Silk, Silk Shag laid upon felt, linen, or other material, each	0	2	0

Upon the Question that the duty on the importation of hops be 2*l.* 5*s.* per cwt., the duty being 4*l.* 10*s.*

MR. CURTEIS suggested that half the protection being about to be removed from the English hop grower, it was only right that the excise duty should be reduced in the same proportion. He knew that many of the hop planters of Sussex would prefer giving up protection altogether if they could be also freed from the excise duties, to having the small protection which would be afforded by the proposed measure, whilst the excise duties remained unaltered. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would reconsider the question, as he would rather leave it in the right hon. Gentleman's hands than submit a Motion upon the subject.

SIR R. PEEL wished he could, with due regard to the revenue, considerably reduce the excise duties; that, however, was quite separate from the question, whether the English hop grower required a greater protective duty against the foreign grower than 2*l.* 5*s.* per cwt. When he last reduced the protection, from 8*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* 10*s.*, it was said that the English hop grower would be ruined. But what had been the consequence? Why the whole amount which had been paid from that time to the present upon the importation of foreign hops had not exceeded 10*l.* Surely the hop grower of this country, who paid only 18*s.* to the Excise, could compete with the foreign grower who would have to pay 2*l.* 5*s.* to the Customs. He really should have greater difficulty in defending the remaining high duty upon hops, if he were called upon to do so, than in defending any other duty which he proposed to retain; and he thought if the hon. Gentleman had been wise, that he would silently have passed the item over. English hops were by far the best that were grown in the world. American hops could by no means compete with them; and taking all things into consideration, he was sure that the English grower, even with the excise duties, need fear nothing from foreign competition.

Duty on hops agreed to.

The following Articles were also agreed to:—

Iron and Steel, wrought, not otherwise enumerated, for every 100*l.* value	£10	0	0
Japanned or Lacquered Ware, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Lace, viz., Thread for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Made by the hand, commonly called Cushion or Pillow Lace, whether of linen, cotton, or silken thread, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Latten wire, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Lead, manufactures of, not otherwise enumerated, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0

Leather, manufactures of :—			
—— Boots, Shoes, and Calashes, viz. :—			
—— Women's Boots and Calashes, the dozen pair	£0	6	0
—— Women's Boots and Calashes, if lined or trimmed with fur or other trimming, the dozen pair	0	7	6
—— Women's Shoes with cork or double soles, quilted shoes and clogs, the dozen pair	0	5	0
—— Women's Shoes, if trimmed or lined with fur or any other trimming, the dozen pair	0	6	0
—— Women's Shoes of silk, satin, jean, or other stuffs, kid, morocco, or other leather, the dozen pair	0	4	6
—— Women's Shoes, if trimmed or lined with fur or any other trimming, the dozen pair	0	5	0
—— Girls' Boots, Shoes, and Calashes, not exceeding seven inches in length, to be charged with two-thirds of the above Duties.			
—— Men's Boots, the dozen pair	0	14	0
—— Men's Shoes, the dozen pair	0	7	0
—— Boys' Boots and Shoes, not exceeding seven inches in length, to be charged with two-thirds of the above Duties.			
Leather Boot Fronts not exceeding nine inches in height, the dozen pair	0	1	9
Leather Boot Fronts exceeding nine inches in height, the dozen pair	0	2	9
Leather cut into shapes, or any article made of Leather, or any manufacture whereof Leather is the most valuable part, not otherwise enumerated or described, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Linen, or Linen and Cotton, viz.—			
—— Cambrics and Lawns, commonly called French Lawns, the piece not exceeding eight yards in length, and not exceeding seven-eighths of a yard in breadth, and so in breadth, and so in proportion for any greater or less quantity, Plain, the piece	0	2	6
—— Bordered Handkerchiefs, the piece	0	2	6
—— Lawns of any sort, not French, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Damasks, the square yard	0	0	5
—— Damask Diaper, the square yard	0	0	2½
—— Sails, not in actual use of a British ship, and not fit and necessary for such ship, and when otherwise disposed of, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Articles, Manufactures of Linen, or of Linen mixed with Cotton, or with Wool wholly or in part made up, not particularly enumerated, or otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Musical Instruments, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Mustard Flour, the cwt.	0	6	0
Paper, printed, painted or stained Paper, or Paper Hangings, or Flock Paper, the square yard	0	0	2
Pencils, for every 100*l.* value	£10	0	0
—— of Slate, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Perfumery, not otherwise charged, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Perry, the tun	5	5	0
Pewter, Manufactures of, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Platting of Straw, the lb.	0	5	0
Pomatum, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Potato Flour, the cwt.	0	1	0
Pots of Stone, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Sago, the cwt.	0	0	6
Sausages or Puddings, the lb.	0	0	1
Silk Manufactures :—			
Manufactures of Silk, or of Silk mixed with metal, or any other material, the produce of Europe, viz.			
Silk or Satin, plain, striped, figured, or brocaded, viz.			
Broad Stuffs, the lb.	0	5	0
Articles thereof not otherwise enumerated, the lb.	0	6	0
Or, at the option of the Officers of the Customs, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
Silk Gauze or Crape, plain, striped, figured, or brocaded, viz.			
Broad Stuffs, the lb.	0	9	0
Articles thereof, not otherwise enumerated, the lb.	0	10	0
Or, at the option of the Officers of the Customs, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
Gauze of all descriptions, mixed with silk, satin, or any other materials in less proportion than one-half part of the fabric, viz.			
Broad Stuff, the lb.	0	9	0
Articles thereof, not otherwise enumerated, the lb.	0	10	0
Or, and at the option of the Officers of the Customs, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
Velvet, plain or figured, viz. Broad Stuffs, the lb.	0	9	0
Articles thereof, not otherwise enumerated, the lb.	0	10	0
Or, and at the option of the Officers of the Customs, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
Ribbons, plain Silk, of one colour only, the lb.	0	6	0
—— plain Satin, of one colour only, the lb.	0	8	0
—— Silk or Satin, striped, figured, or brocaded ; or plain Ribbons of more than one colour, the lb.	0	10	0
—— Gauze or Crape, plain, striped, figured, or brocaded, the lb.	0	14	0
—— Gauze mixed with Silk, Satin, or other materials of less proportion than one half part of the fabric, the lb.	0	12	0
—— Velvet, or Silk embossed with Velvet, the lb.	0	10	0
Artificial Flowers, wholly, or in part of Silk, for every 100*l.* value	25	0	0
Manufactures of Silk, or of Silk and any other material called Plush, commonly used for making hats, the lb.	0	2	0

Fancy Silk Net, or Tricot, the lb.	£0	8	0
Plain Silk Lace, or Net called Tulle, the lb.	0	8	0
Manufactures of Silk, or of Silk mixed with any other materials, not particularly enumerated, or otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
—— of or from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Millinery, of Silk, or of which the greater part of the material is Silk, viz.			
Turbans or Caps, each	0	3	6
Hats or Bonnets, each	0	7	0
Dresses, each	1	10	0
Manufactures of Silk, or of Silk and any other materials, and articles of the same wholly or partially made up, not particularly enumerated or otherwise charged with duty, for every 100*l.* value	15	0	0
Silk Worm Gut, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Skins, articles manufactured of Skins or Furs, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Of and from a British Possession	5	0	0
Soap, Hard, the cwt.	1	0	0
Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	14	0
—— Soft, the cwt.	0	14	0
Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	10	0
—— Naples, the cwt.	1	0	0
Spa Ware, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Spirits or Strong Waters of all sorts, viz.			
—— For every gallon of such Spirits or strong Waters of any strength not exceeding the strength of proof by Sykes's hydrometer, and so in proportion for any greater or less strength than the strength of proof, and for any greater or less quantity than a gallon, viz.			
—— not being Spirits or Strong Waters the produce of any British Possession in America, or any British Possession within the limits of the East India Company's Charter, and not being sweetened Spirits or Spirits mixed with any article, so that the degree of strength therefore cannot be exactly ascertained by such hydrometer, the gallon	0	15	0
Starch, the cwt.	0	5	0
Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
From and after the 1st of February 1849, the cwt.	0	1	0
—— Gum of, torrified or calcined, commonly called British Gum, the cwt.	0	5	0
Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
—— Gum of, torrified or calcined, commonly called British Gum, from and after the 1st February 1849, the cwt.	0	1	0
Steel, Manufactures of, for every 100*l.* value	£10	0	0
Tallow, the cwt.	0	1	6
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	0	1
Tapioca, the cwt.	0	0	6
Tin, Manufactures of, not otherwise enumerated, for every 100*l.* value.	10	0	0
Tobacco Pipes of Clay, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Tongues, the cwt.	0	7	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	0
Turnery, not otherwise described, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Twine, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
Varnish, not otherwise described, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Verjuice, the ton	4	4	0
Wafers, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Washing Balls, the cwt.	1	0	0
Wax, Sealing Wax, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0
Whip Cord, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0

The above Articles having been read by the Chairman,

DR. BOWRING regretted that French wines had not been included in the Resolutions. French wines could be bought at 2*d.* or 4*d.* per bottle, and if the duty were lowered to 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* per gallon, excellent wines would be accessible to the people of this country at 1*s.* per bottle, which would be conferring a great benefit upon them. It was a curious fact, that notwithstanding the increase which had taken place in the population, there was 200 years ago a greater quantity of French wines then consumed than at the present moment. Though he felt that he ought to offer no impediment to the progress of a measure so important as that which the right hon. Baronet had introduced to the notice of the House, yet he begged respectfully and earnestly to recommend him to apply to this case his own principle, and obtain for the people of England an excellent and a cheap beverage; and he was quite sure that the consequence would be, that he would create a power and influence elsewhere which would be found advantageous in every respect.

SIR R. PEEL did not think that the falling-off in the consumption of wine to which the hon. Member alluded was attributable to the duty alone. There had been a great change in the habits of the people of this country. Much might, no doubt, be said in favour of reducing the duty on French wines; and so there might in favour of a reduction of the duty on tea; but there must be some limit to the re-

ductions of revenue in this country; and he only asked the House not to be too precipitate and too rash in reducing the revenue, particularly on the great articles of consumption. He was happy to think that the doctrines of free trade were making great progress in other countries; and he had no doubt that ultimately, although opposed by the French Chambers, the French Government would be supported by the great mass of public opinion in their attempts to relax their commercial code. The great body of consumers, he believed, would not continue so patient as they had been, and would not submit to see their interests sacrificed by those who had a monopoly in that country. He hoped also that the day was not far distant when there would be a better feeling in the French Chambers on this subject.

The following Resolutions were agreed to:—

Wire, Gilt or Plated, or Silver, for every 100*l.* value . . .	£10	0	0
Woollens, Articles or Manufactures of Wool not being Goats' Wool, or of Wool mixed with Cotton, wholly or in part made up, not otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value . . .	10	0	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value . .	5	0	0
Goods, Wares, and Merchandize, being either in part or wholly manufactured, and not being enumerated or described, not otherwise charged with Duty, and not prohibited to be imported into or used in Great Britain or Ireland, for every 100*l.* value	10	0	0

On the Question that in lieu of the duties of Customs now chargeable on the Articles undermentioned, imported into the United Kingdom, the following duties shall be charged,

Lord J. RUSSELL: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to explain the principle on which he has acted in this Tariff. When the question of the Corn duty was discussed in 1815, Lord Grenville, as was well known, made a memorable protest against the imposition of any duty upon that article, when Lord Grey said, "If you let the manufacturer have his corn cheap, why not let the farmer have his coat cheap?" To which Lord Grenville answered that the request was perfectly reasonable, and that he meant to do away with the protection upon woollen cloth as well as with the protection upon corn. I observe, however, that in the present Tariff it is proposed to retain a duty of 10 per cent upon a number of manufactured articles. Now, for my part, I can see no objection to this during the intermediate time that the Corn Laws last; but when in 1849 the duty upon wheat, barley, and oats shall be reduced to a nominal duty of 1*s.*, I confess I cannot see the principle upon which you can maintain a duty of 10 per cent on manufactures. I can understand Gentlemen who are in favour of protection assenting to this as part of a system which ought to be maintained; but with respect to the right hon. Baronet, who now maintains what seems to a majority of the House a sound principle on the subject, and when we are now beginning a new career in this country with respect to trade and commerce, I do not see the principle upon which we maintain these duties. I know that there are several articles of manufacture on which the duty is entirely taken off, but in respect to articles in which competition is feared there is a duty of 10 per cent still maintained, and I wish to know on what principle this is done?

Sir R. PEEL said, that at present on the chief articles of manufacture entering into the clothing of the poorer classes, there was an absolute and immediate reduction of duty. The noble Lord would recollect that 10 per cent was all the duty now leviable on the articles to which he had referred. On cotton, woollen, and linen goods there had been a total repeal of the duty, not at the end of three years, but instantaneously. The noble Lord might as well ask him why, if he adopted a total and immediate repeal of the duties on cotton, woollen, and linen goods, he at the same time retained the duties on corn for three years? He (Sir R. Peel) should have just as great difficulty in answering that question, as in answering that which the noble Lord actually asked. The total amount of revenue received on the articles to which the noble Lord referred, amounted to not less than 2,300,000*l.*; and, as he had before stated, considerations of revenue must partly influence the decision of Her Majesty's Government. With respect to many of those articles, he was not prepared to propose an instantaneous repeal of the duties; nor did he at present consider it advisable that at the end of three years the whole of the duties on these manufactured articles should cease. If at the end of three years, without danger, in consequence of the reductions of duties on Colonial articles and articles of provisions,

the reduction could be made, it would be open to the House to make it; and if the noble Lord, being then Minister, should come down and propose a reduction of those duties to the extent of 3 per cent to 7 per cent, Parliament would be at liberty to adopt it. On the whole, the principle he laid down was the instantaneous repeal of all duties on the chief articles which entered into the consumption of the poor, a total abolition of the Corn Laws to take place at the end of three years, and a reduction to 10 per cent of the duties on manufactures; and he could not give a better answer to the question of the noble Lord than to say, that at the end of three years it would be perfectly open to Parliament to consider what ought then to be done wish these duties.

LORD J. RUSSELL quite agreed that, making so great a change, they ought not to affect the revenue materially, contrary to the opinion of the Government; but if he looked at these articles, he found that they only produced 600*l.* or 700*l.* a year to the revenue, which could not be considered material. Of course, he did not mean to include such articles as silk. On the whole, however, seeing that the right hon. Gentleman's protection was not very great, and that the subject would be open for the future opinion of Parliament, he should rest contented with the answer of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. T. BARING said, if the House were to adopt the noble Lord's proposition, they should be sacrificing altogether the revenue derived from indirect taxation. The reduction of duty proposed would not, he believed, render these goods one farthing a yard cheaper to the consumer. On the plan that the noble Lord advocated, of taking off all duties, they would not only not benefit the consumer, and not benefit the manufacturer, and not enlarge their trade, but they would be making the whole of the Customs duties fall on a few—twelve or fifteen—articles, which would make it a taxation on population; but if the population of this country once saw that articles in which they were mainly interested were made the principal objects of taxation, he thought they would never be content to let tea, tobacco, and coffee be taxed, when agates and articles down to vellum were not taxed. The country must have direct taxation in that case; and, if so, he would leave the noble Lord to say how he, with such a taxation on capital, could help driving capital out of the country. That was the ground on which he had felt great doubt about the policy of Her Majesty's Government in throwing away hundreds of thousands of pounds without any advantage to anybody, which, if the revenue could have spared the amount, might have been applied to the reduction of the duty on tea, or other articles of great importance to the country.

LORD J. RUSSELL said, the system of which the hon. Member spoke might be good or might be bad; but it was not the system which he (Lord J. Russell) had spoken of. He had spoken of articles of which the duties had been imposed for the sake of revenue. He saw that 625*l.* was the amount of revenue derived from woollen goods. Surely the hon. Member would not say that sum was material on a question of revenue. He (Lord J. Russell) should have thought, whether it were wise or unwise to reduce the whole revenue of the Customs to 10 or 12 articles, that at least no one would deny it was not desirable to have 1,100 articles of taxation; and he said that where the article did not yield a revenue, when the duty was put on for the purpose of protection, now, when the system was to take off protection from agriculture, such protective duty not yielding a revenue on manufactured goods, ought to be abolished also.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that the noble Lord could hardly pronounce what would be the effect of the abolition of the duty of 10 per cent at the end of three years, since he could not yet tell what would be the effect at the end of three years of reducing the 20 per cent duty to 10 per cent.

MR. HUME was surprised to hear such doctrines from the hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. Baring). The hon. Gentleman seemed to be retreating to times which he (Mr. Hume) hoped would never return. The hon. Gentleman's doctrines were unaccountable, except on the supposition that he had not read the Papers already on the Table. He would have found from the Report of the Import Duties Committee, that of 1,150 articles of taxation, 1,000, as they showed, might be struck off, at a loss of not above between 500*l.* and 600*l.* a year to the revenue. What had been the result of the reductions already made by the right hon. Baronet? He had struck off about 500 articles the first year, and 75 the next. Had any reduction in the revenue taken place? On the contrary,

there had been an increase in all the departments of it. It had been found that a revenue of 22,000,000*l.* comprised only 22 articles. The hon. Gentleman had a great fear of direct taxation: he thought it one of the great merits of the right hon. Baronet's policy that it was bringing them to a more direct taxation of capital and property. Under a better system they might do away with the Excise department entirely; the collection of the duties on malt and spirits might be turned over to the Custom-house, the licenses might be given to the Board of Stamps, and then there would be left no need of the Excise at all, which at present cost 900,000*l.* a year. The right hon. Baronet had been successful upon all the principles he had laid down; he hoped he would proceed and depend upon direct taxation as much as possible.

Sir R. PEEL intended to-morrow to move for a great number of Returns, to which he hoped the attention of the House would be directed. They would refer to the effect of taking off the duties on wool, flax, linen, and shipping; in many points it would be of great importance the House should be acquainted with them before proceeding on the subject the hon. Member behind him (Mr. T. Baring) and the noble Lord had referred to. He should move for these Returns; and if any hon. Gentleman thought they were incomplete, though unintentionally so, and that any supplemental information was required, he should be perfectly ready to give any other returns that might be thought calculated to afford information on the subject. Reductions last year were made upon the glass duties and the duties on auctions. One of the grounds on which he invited the House to consent to that reduction was, that it would enable them to make a reduction in the Excise establishment; the saving in the salaries of officers in the Excise alone, mainly owing to the auction duty having been repealed, and the reduction of the duty on glass, was 52,636*l.*; thus, the public had not only the advantage of the improvement in the manufacture of glass, arising from the removal of the Excise restrictions, but from the saving in the expense of the Excise establishment also.

Mr. NEWDEGATE, with reference to the observations of the hon. Member for Montrose, did not consider a saving of 500,000*l.* per annum, which he (Mr. Hume) considered such a trifle, an equivalent for the change in commercial policy to which the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government was about to subject the country. He (Mr. Newdegate) thought that as the Custom-houses must be retained, the argument that because small duties were levied at some expense they were not worth collecting, tended directly *in absurdum*.

Mr. Alderman COPELAND observed that if he could have obtained as much labour as he required, he could have carried on an immense trade. The public had not benefited by the right hon. Baronet's alteration of the duties on glass so much as they would have done, if there had not been a scarcity of labour.

Mr. HUDSON said, that although there had been an increase on the article of glass, and that such increase would most probably continue, the question was, whether any protection was to be continued to manufactures, when it had been totally withdrawn from agriculture? The right hon. Baronet had not announced his intention to abolish protection on manufactures at the end of three years; but the country would expect that if protection were removed from agriculture, it would also be taken off manufactures. The country, he repeated, would look for justice in this respect; and if even-handed justice was to be dealt out, protection ought to be taken from manufactures as well as agriculture. Whether the present tax could be considered a protection to manufactures or not, the country would think it a tax of 10 per cent., and would demand its removal. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would well consider whether he could not confirm the entire principle, and say, "Protection to all classes shall cease at the expiration of three years." Protection could not, with any degree of consistency, be withdrawn from agriculture while the taxes on tea, sugar, and malt were retained. The principle, in his opinion, ought to be applied to all classes or to none.

Dr. BOWRING was rejoiced to hear a Gentleman connected with an establishment known to the ends of the earth express opinions so favourable to free trade, and declare his desire to have what might so justly be called "the burdens" of protection removed from the manufacturing classes.

Mr. BORTHWICK believed that the principles of the question had been placed on a clear and intelligible basis by the noble Lord the Member for London; and

called the attention of the House to the fact that no impediment had been thrown in the way of the discussion by his (Mr. Borthwick's) hon. Friends on that side of the House, whilst hon. Gentlemen opposite, and many supporters of Her Majesty's Government, had adopted a different line of conduct.

MR. DUNCAN, as the representative of a considerable manufacturing constituency, begged leave to assure the House, that so far from the manufacturers being desirous of retaining any protective duties for three years, or even one year, they did not desire their continued existence for one moment.

CAPTAIN HARRIS regretted that a spirit of compensation to the agricultural interest had been so completely neglected in the formation of the present Tariff, and recommended the reduction of duties on tin, and the abolition of the malt tax, as likely to prove of essential service to the farmers.

Resolutions to be reported.

The whole of the remaining Resolutions were then agreed to as follows :—

4. *Resolved*—That in lieu of the Duties of Customs now chargeable on the Articles under mentioned imported into the United Kingdom, the following Duties shall be charged, from and after the 1st day of June, 1846, viz.

SEEDS, viz :—			
Canary, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Carraway, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Carrot, the cwt.	5	0	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Clover, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Leek, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
Mustard, the cwt.	0	1	3
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	0	7½
Onion, the cwt.	0	5	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, the cwt.	0	2	6
All other Seeds not particularly enumerated or described, or otherwise charged with Duty, for every 100*l.* value	5	0	0
—— Of and from a British Possession, for every 100*l.* value	2	10	0

5. *Resolved*—That the Duties of Customs chargeable upon the Goods, Wares, and Merchandize hereafter mentioned, imported into the United Kingdom, shall cease and determine, viz.

ANIMALS, living, viz :—
Asses.
Goats.
Kids.
Oxen and Bulls.
Cows.
Calves.
Horses, Mares, Geldings, Colts, Foals.
Mules.
Sheep.
Lambs.
Swine and Hogs.
Pigs, sucking.
Bacon.
Beef, fresh, or slightly salted.
Beef salted, not being corned Beef.
Bottles of Earth and Stone empty.
Casts of Busts, Statues, or Figures.
Caviare.
Cherry Wood, being Furniture Wood.
Cranberries.
Cotton Manufactures, not being articles wholly or in part made up, not otherwise charged with Duty.
Enamel.
Gelatine.
Glue.
Hay.
Hides, or pieces thereof, tawed, curried, varnished, japanned, enamelled, Muscovy or Russia Hides, or pieces thereof, tanned, coloured, shaved, or otherwise dressed, and Hides, or pieces thereof, in any way dressed, not otherwise enumerated.
Ink for Printers.
Inkle, wrought.
Lamp Black.
Linen, viz. Plain Linens and Diaper, whether chequered or striped with Dye Yarn or not, and Manufactures of Linen, or of Linen mixed with Cotton, or with Wool, not particularly enumerated, or otherwise charged with Duty, not being articles wholly or in part made up.
Magna Græcia Ware.
Manuscripts.
Maps and Charts, or parts thereof, plain or coloured.
Mattresses.
Meat, salted or fresh, not otherwise described.
Medals, of any sort.
Palmetto, Thatch Manufactures.
Parchment.
Partridge Wood, being Furniture Wood.
Pens.
Plantains.
Potatoes.
Pork, fresh.
—— salted, not Hams.
Purple Wood, being Furniture Wood.
Silk, Thrown, dyed, viz ;
—— Singles or Tram, Organzine or Crape Silk.
Telescopes.
Thread, not otherwise enumerated or described.
Woollens, viz :—Manufactures of Wool, not being Goats' Wool, or of Wool mixed with Cotton, not particularly enumerated or described ; not otherwise charged with Duty, not being articles wholly or in part made up.
Vegetables, all, not otherwise enumerated or described.
Vellum.

6. *Resolved*—That, from and after the 5th day of April, 1847, the Duties of Customs now payable upon the Foreign Goods under mentioned shall cease and determine, and that in lieu thereof there shall be charged the following Duties on such Foreign Goods on their importation into the United Kingdom, viz.

Articles.	From and after 5 April, 1847. £ s. d.	From and after 5 April, 1848. £ s. d.
Upon Timber and Wood Goods not otherwise charged, viz.		
Timber or Wood, not being Deals, Battens, Boards, Staves, Handspikes, Oars, Lathwood, or other Timber or Wood, sawn, split, or otherwise dressed, except hewn, and not being Timber or Wood otherwise charged with Duty, the load of 50 cubic feet	1 0 0	0 15 0
—— Deals, Battens, Boards, or other Timber or Wood, sawn or split, and not otherwise charged with Duty, the load of 50 cubic feet	1 6 0	1 0 0
—— Staves, if exceeding 72 inches in length, 7 inches in breadth, or 3½ inches in thickness, the load of 50 cubic feet	1 3 0	0 18 0
—— Firewood, the fathom of 216 cubic feet	0 8 0	0 6 0
—— Handspikes, not exceeding 7 feet in length, the 120	0 16 0	0 12 0
—— exceeding 7 feet in length the 120	1 12 0	1 4 0
—— Knees, under 5 inches square the 120	0 8 0	0 6 0
—— 5 inches and under 8 inches square, the 120	1 12 0	1 4 0
—— Lathwood, the fathom of 216 cubic feet	1 12 0	1 4 0
—— Oars, the 120	6 0 0	4 10 0
—— Spars or Poles under 22 feet in length, and under 4 inches in diameter, the 120	0 16 0	0 12 0
—— 22 feet in length and upwards, and under 4 inches in diameter, the 120	1 12 0	1 4 0
—— of all lengths, 4 inches and under 6 inches in diameter, the 120	3 4 0	2 8 0
—— Spokes for Wheels, not exceeding 2 feet in length, the 1,000	1 12 0	1 4 0
—— exceeding 2 feet in length, the 1,000	3 4 0	2 8 0
—— Wood, planed, or otherwise dressed or prepared for use, and not particularly enumerated nor otherwise charged with Duty	0 0 6 per foot of cubic contents, and further for every £100 value, £10	0 0 4 per foot of cubic contents, and further for every £100 value, £10

Or, in lieu of the Duties imposed upon Wood by the load according to the cubic content, the importer may have the option, at the time of passing the first entry, of entering Battens, Batten Ends, Boards, Deals, Deal Ends, and Plank, by Tale, if of or from Foreign Countries, according to the following Dimensions, viz.:—

Articles.	Not above 7 inches in width	From and after 5th April, 1847. Not above 1¼ inch in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1847. Above 1¼ inch and not above 2¾ in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1848. Not above 1¼ inch in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1848. Above 1¼ inch and not above 2¾ in thickness.
Battens and Batten Ends:—	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Not above 6 feet in length the 120	...	1 4 8	2 9 3	0 18 6	1 17 0
Above 6 and not above 9 feet in length the 120	...	1 16 11	3 13 10	1 7 9	2 15 6
Above 9 and not above 12 feet in length the 120	...	2 9 3	4 18 6	1 16 11	3 13 10
Above 12 and not above 15 feet in length the 120	...	3 1 7	6 3 2	2 6 3	4 12 6
Above 15 and not above 18 feet in length the 120	...	3 13 10	7 7 8	2 15 4	5 10 8
Above 18 and not above 21 feet in length the 120	...	4 6 2	8 12 4	3 4 6	6 9 0
Boards, Deals, Deal Ends, and Plank:—	Not above 9½ inches in width	Not above 1½ inch in thickness.	Above 1½ inch and not above 3¼ in thickness.	Not above 1½ inch in thickness.	Above 1½ inch and not above 3¼ in thickness.
Not above 6 feet in length the 120	...	1 19 6	3 19 0	1 9 10	2 19 8
Above 6 and not above 9 feet in length the 120	...	2 19 3	5 18 6	2 4 5	4 8 10
Above 9 and not above 12 feet in length the 120	...	3 19 0	7 18 0	2 19 2	5 18 4

ARTICLES.—*Continued.*	Not above 9½ inches in width.	From and after 5th April, 1847. Not above 1½ inch in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1847. Above 1½ inch and not above 3¼ in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1848. Not above 1½ inch in thickness.	From and after 5th April, 1848. Above 1½ inch and not above 3¼ in thickness.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Above 12 and not above 15 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	4 18 10	9 17 8	3 14 2	7 8 4
Above 15 and not above 18 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	5 18 7	11 17 2	4 8 11	8 17 10
Above 18 and not above 21 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	6 18 4	13 16 8	5 3 8	10 7 4
	Above 9½ inches and not above 11½ in Width.				
Not above 6 feet in length . the 120	...	2 7 10	4 15 8	1 15 10	3 11 8
Above 6 and not above 9 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	3 11 8	7 3 4	2 13 8	5 7 4
Above 9 and not above 12 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	4 15 7	9 11 2	3 11 7	7 3 2
Above 12 and not above 18 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	5 19 7	11 19 2	4 9 7	8 19 2
Above 15 and not above 18 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	7 3 6	14 7 0	5 7 6	10 15 0
Above 18 and not above 21 feet in length . . . . the 120	...	8 7 6	16 15 0	6 5 8	12 11 4

House adjourned at a quarter to One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 10, 1846.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Forres, for Repeal of the Legacy Duty.—From Rothes and Fordyce, against the present Practice of Granting Spirit Licenses to Keepers of Toll Houses in Scotland.—From Limerick, and a great number of other places, for Protection to the Agricultural Interest.—From Landowners and others interested in the Cultivation of Hops in the County of Sussex, against the Repeal of the Hop Duty.—From Physicians and Surgeons of the Public Medical Institutions of the City of Cork, and its Vicinity, for the Better Regulation and more Efficient Support of the Medical Charities (Ireland).—From Bowden, against the Reorganization of the Militia.—From Master, Wardens, and Freemen of the Clothworkers of the City of London, against the Charitable Trusts Bill.

STATE OF IRELAND.

LORD BROUGHAM rose to present a petition from the Marquess of Westmeath, a Member of their Lordships' House, but petitioning in his private capacity as a holder of land in Ireland. He (Lord Brougham) was not answerable for the statements in the petition; but this he would say, that if any thing like what was said by the noble Marquess were true, he had never heard of any civilized country being in such a state as that part of Ireland in which the noble Marquess's property was situated—the county of Roscommon. The noble and learned Lord proceeded to read from the petition:—

"That your petitioner has been, for nearly thirty-two years, possessed of about 1,200 Irish acres of land in the parish of Kilglass, barony of Ballintobber, county of Roscommon, in Ireland. That neither his late father nor petitioner himself ever gave a lease or subdivided land for the purpose of making a freehold. That petitioner has always been desirous of introducing a good system of husbandry upon his estates, and improving the condition of his tenantry in every way; but that his tenantry, generally, in this parish, have fostered inveterate habits of dishonesty and fraud, and counteracted him to the utmost of their power during that long period in his endeavours by an enlightened system to better their condition. That such a system of combination exists that no tenant, if even reasonably disposed, dare follow petitioner's recommendations or wishes for the improvement of a barbarous system of occupation and culture."

The petitioner then proceeded to describe the ruinous effect of the conacre system on his property, and went on to say:—

"That your petitioner's estate is all but ruined by this system; and by combination established through terror, and confirmed by fraud, among the tenants, the most gross untruths have been fabricated in Ireland, to be propagated in Great Britain, for the purpose of imposing on well-meaning simple persons, and inducing them to attribute the disturbances of Ireland to the mismanagement and extortion of landlords. That the purpose of these misrepresentations is to prejudice Parliament, and indispose it to give land-

lords the relief of any justice in their case. That for the same ends, and simultaneously, a yell of agitation and sedition is propagated to screen these aggressions and encroachments upon property, and to produce general confusion throughout the country. The petitioner therefore feels himself compelled to place an undeniable catalogue of crime and villany, of which he has been the victim, on this particular estate, which will be found to be an answer to whatever exaggerated or untrue statements either dupes or knaves may deal in or advance to conceal or disguise the truth from Parliament."

After further stating the evils to which he was subjected from the tenants who continued on his land against his will, the petitioner proceeded to say :—

"That your petitioner begs to represent to your Lordships that the same persons, or their families, are mostly, with little exception, occupiers against the will and wish of your petitioner of the same land; that a confederacy of a still more lawless and brutal kind has been just recently formed among them, evinced by an open declaration of a determination to pay no further rent to your petitioner at all, of which they now owe mostly two years, besides arrears; that the present disease in the potato crop is the pretext in some respect for this conduct; but is no reason whatever, in point of fact, as your petitioner's rents have been paid in other places of the same county; and that the occupiers who hold from your petitioner direct, ought not to be justified by the chicanery which the law permits from paying him, because there may be poverty and distress among the squatters and their families, who have notoriously, against law, reason, and the faith of contracts, been permitted to subdivide and appropriate petitioner's lands among themselves to petitioner's extreme injury. That your Lordships may have no doubt of the cruel hardships and privations which many landlords in that country are suffering under, while exposed to continual obloquy in this; and in proof that much of the stated distress in Ireland is simulated, your petitioner has but to refer to the fact that a tax has been, under the influence of undue excitement for six years past levied on the tenantry and people of that country in the Romish chapels, called the 'O'Connell tribute,' amounting, according to the official published account, to upwards of 127,869*l.*, and for which the usual annual proclamation has been made on an early Sunday to repeat. That it is pretended this tax is a voluntary contribution; but, whether it be so or not, it is certain the tenantry could not contribute to it if the law was in the ascendant until they had honestly acquitted themselves of their just obligations."

He (Lord Brougham) had often heard it observed that the Irish were the most charitable people in the world, nor would he quarrel with them for giving dole to any mendicant, great or little—poor creatures! but if they chose to spend so large a sum as 127,869*l.* in six years on what was called the "O'Connell Tribute," they certainly ought not to come to England and ask for relief to the amount of 500,000*l.* The noble and learned Lord concluded by the prayer of the petition, which was as follows :—

"That your petitioner prays your Lordships to provide that no occupation of any description of land in a country so exclusively agricultural as Ireland is, may be encouraged or permitted by law, without certain and immediate securities to control and enforce contracts; that laxity may not, as at present, necessarily lead to fraud, chicanery, perjury, demoralization, and disturbance; that means may be devised by the wisdom of your Lordships to have agreements promptly enforced, of which no man could justly complain; that industry and thrift may be encouraged, and overholding by illegal combination rendered a punishable offence, as a forcible possession is now presumed to be. That, as this statement is not overcharged, but very generally a true picture of the state of the whole of the same district, your petitioner prays your Lordships to pass a law whereby persons in the occupation of land not their own may be prevented *in limine* from subdividing the land of other persons against the will and wish of the proprietors, and against the faith of their own contracts, instead of driving proprietors to a remedy by ejectment after the injury is done, which Irish tenants in many places now think, when used, ought to be resented by assassination. That measures may be taken to abridge and diminish the unblushing practice of perjury, now notoriously so common in the courts of quarter sessions in Ireland, by the appointing an officer to write down evidence as it is delivered, to serve towards the ends of conviction for so odious a crime, when necessary. That your Lordships will also be pleased to enact a law whereby the persons for whose interest and benefit, or for the interest and benefit of those who shall occupy land or premises which the owner or tenant is compelled by threats or terror to surrender, shall be held responsible themselves, as if parties taking forcible possession thereof."

Petition laid on the Table.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND) BILL.

The EARL of SHAFTESBURY brought up the Report on this Bill.

The LORD CHANCELLOR moved an Amendment on the First Clause, which gives a discretionary power to the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim a district, judging of the state of crime generally from the official information before him.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE suggested that the sending of threatening notices should be included in the list of crimes which would justify the proclaiming of a district.

The LORD CHANCELLOR thought it would be dangerous to introduce any such clause as that recommended relative to threatening notices. It would be, in his opinion, giving encouragement to crime, for any individual might sit down and write a hundred notices of the kind addressed to himself.

Amendment agreed to.

On Clause being read,

The EARL of WICKLOW said, he had previously suggested that instead of a man being detained in custody for a period of six or seven days to wait for the petty sessions, he should, if arrested under this Bill, be brought before the nearest magistrate; and if he should there show sufficient cause, be admitted to bail to appear before another tribunal.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS had no doubt that the objection raised to the clause had no foundation. The fact of there being a stipendiary magistrate in every district would ensure a petty session, and at once do away with the objection raised of a man being kept in confinement to await the meeting of such bench.

The EARL of BESSBOROUGH was opposed to any measure which would empower the police to march a man twenty miles from his home to a county jail or town, to be tried by a petty session, without strong proof of his guilt, when an equally stringent investigation might be made in the presence of the most convenient magistrate.

LORD MONTEAGLE expressed himself very much disappointed, that after what had been stated in the House on the previous night, the noble Earl had not introduced an Amendment giving power to the arresting constable to take a prisoner immediately before the nearest magistrate, in cases where petty sessions would not be held for several days after the arrest. He thought it would be exceedingly hard for a man, who was probably innocent, to be arrested, say on the evening of the day on which the weekly petty sessions were held, and to be kept in confinement for a whole week, without any one having power to release him. He was clearly of opinion that prisoners ought at once to be taken before a single magistrate, without waiting for the petty sessions.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, it was desirable that the Bill should not go down to the other House of Parliament without having received the general assent of their Lordships, and he therefore proposed to let this clause stand over till the third reading of the Bill, and in the meantime he would reconsider it, and endeavour to meet their Lordships' views.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE thought it was of the utmost importance that power should be vested in one magistrate either to bail or discharge any man who had been wrongfully arrested by a policeman. He did not attach much weight to the argument that no one magistrate would undertake the responsibility, because he (the Marquess of Clanricarde) was of opinion that if a magistrate was afraid to discharge his duty, he ought not to be allowed to continue in the commission of the peace. But he had no fear that any magistrate would be afraid to discharge his duty, either by remanding the accused, if he thought the circumstances of the case warranted, or of admitting him to bail.

The EARL of WICKLOW: That's my proposition.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS did not conceive that the clause, as it at present stood, imposed any hardship upon the prisoner. If an individual magistrate was to have the power of admitting an accused person to bail, or of dismissing or committing him, they would be making that magistrate a judge of the guilt or innocence of the prisoner.

The DUKE of RICHMOND was decidedly opposed to the present clause. He was of the same opinion as the noble Marquess (Clanricarde), that the prisoner should be immediately taken before a magistrate, and if there was no *primâ facie* case against him, that the magistrate should have the power to dismiss him, or hold him to bail; and, on the contrary, if there was a clear case made out, that he should have the power to commit to the petty sessions, if he thought that, by allowing bail, the prisoner would elude justice. He thought they should not insert any clause in the Bill which was unnecessarily stringent.

The EARL of DEVON could not agree with the clause in its present shape; he thought the same privilege should be given to offenders against this law as was given to every class of criminals in England and Ireland—namely, that upon being accused of a crime, they should be carried before a magistrate immediately, who, upon hearing the nature of the charge, would decide whether he could receive bail or not.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS said, after what had passed from noble Lords, he did not feel himself justified in persisting in the clause as it at present stood, and therefore proposed to postpone it for consideration until the third reading of the Bill.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, there were two alterations in reference to this clause; one was that suggested by the

noble Earl (Wicklow) that the prisoner should be carried before a single magistrate, who should either discharge him, or bail, or commit him to the petty sessions, where it would be decided whether there was a sufficient case to send him to trial. The other alternative was, that the magistrate should have the power to discharge a prisoner, or bail, or commit him for trial at the assize at once, without the intervention of the petty sessions at all. It would perhaps be better to get rid of the incumbrance of petty sessions, instead of trying a man as it were three times—first before a magistrate, then in a more formal manner by the petty sessions, and lastly at the assizes. He thought perhaps if the prisoner went direct from the magistrates to the assizes, he would go with less prejudice and more advantage to himself, than if he went through all the usual machinery of petty sessions.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE said the petty sessions was a very important point. It was quite true a prisoner might go with disadvantage to himself from a petty session to an assize, but then perhaps it might so happen that he would not go at all.

EARL GREY entirely concurred in the alternative which had been mentioned by the noble and learned Lord upon the Woolsack.

Clause postponed.

On the 16th Clause being read,

LORD CAMPBELL regretted that the Government had not adopted a suggestion that had been thrown out to classify these offences, so as to make being out after sunset simple misdemeanor, and being out with arms or with some unlawful purpose an aggravated misdemeanor. He remembered that twenty years ago, when it was proposed to mitigate the criminal code, the argument used was, that these things might with safety be left to the discretion of the Judge; and yet it had been found necessary since to abolish capital punishment in several instances.

LORD COTTENHAM said, it was somewhat anomalous that in the existing Whiteboy Act the crime of being found not only under suspicious circumstances, but actually guilty of an offence, was only punished with imprisonment; whilst it was proposed by the present Bill to render a man liable to transportation who should be found away from his habitation in a proclaimed district after sunset. He was decidedly of opinion that some such distinction as that proposed by the noble Earl (Stradbroke), on the previous evening, should be adopted.

The LORD CHANCELLOR would refer the noble and learned Lord to his noble and learned Friend beside him for an explanation, the words in question having been taken from an Act introduced by that noble and learned Lord some years ago. The noble and Lord asked what were suspicious circumstances? If a person when challenged attempted to run away, or if he were found with concealed arms about him, those would be circumstances of suspicion. The noble and learned Lord then said, this Bill was irreconcilable with the Whiteboy Act in this respect. The Whiteboy Act was applicable to all circumstances and all times; but the present measure was applicable only to particular times, and to districts that were proclaimed; and it was intended that a crime committed in a proclaimed district, should be punished with greater severity than elsewhere.

LORD CAMPBELL said, it was a mistake to suppose that there was any analogy between this measure and the Whiteboy Act. It was true there was a clause in that Act which punished a party for being out after sunset under suspicious circumstances; but the offence was made in that Act a simple misdemeanor, punishable by fine and imprisonment; but this Bill punished a party apprehended under suspicious circumstances with transportation for seven years, whereas the actual offence was punishable only by imprisonment.

The LORD CHANCELLOR remarked, that his answer had no reference to the extent of the punishment, but merely to what were suspicious circumstances; and upon that point he had referred his noble and learned Friend for an explanation to the noble and learned Lord (Campbell) who was the author of a Bill which was open to the same objection.

LORD COTTENHAM observed, that it was no answer to an absurdity in this Bill to say that at some previous time something equally absurd had been introduced into another Bill. What he wished to call attention to was the fact that this Bill punished the suspicion of an act in a proclaimed district, more severely than they punished the offence itself in other places.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: But in the proclaimed districts offenders would be

punished not under the Whiteboy Act, but under this Bill.

LORD COTTENHAM: There were many offences recognised by the Whiteboy Act which this Bill did not touch, and which, if punished at all in the proclaimed districts, must be punished under the Whiteboy Act.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: If a man is found out of his house after night in a proclaimed district under suspicious circumstances, he will be punished under this Act.

EARL GREY said, it was clear that by this Bill they punished more severely the mere suspicion of an offence, than under the Act of 1833 they did its actual commission. Undoubtedly this was the severest Act ever proposed to Parliament in that respect.

The other clauses were then agreed to with verbal Amendments.

Further consideration of Report put off till Thursday.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 10, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Bridport, Alexander Dundas Ross Wishart Baillie Cochrane, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—*Reported.* Metropolitan Buildings (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Adderly, Mr. Newdegate, and Mr. Spooner, from Electors of Stafford, Warwick, and Worcester. alleging Fraudulent Objections to Votes of Electors.—By Mr. Bulkeley Hughes, from Ministers, Churchwardens, and others, of the Parishes of Criccieth and Ynyscynhaiarn, against Union of St. Asaph and Bangor Dioceses.—By Mr. Masterman, from Merchants, Shipowners, Importers of Copper Ore, and Copper Smelters, for Repeal of Duty on Copper.—By Viscount Jocelyn, from Churchwardens, Overseers, Landowners, Farmers, and Agricultural Labourers of the Parishes of Watlington and Saint Germans, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By several hon. Members, from various places, for Remission of Sentence upon William S. Ellis.—By several hon. Members, from an immense number of places, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Wakley, from Messrs. Weeks and Day, of Gloucester Place, King's Road, Chelsea, Horticultural Builders, for exempting Greenhouses from Metropolitan Buildings Act.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against Enrolment of Militia.—By several hon. Members, from places in Scotland, for Alteration of Prisons (Scotland) Act.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Inhabitants of Birmingham, for Remission of Sentence upon Roberts, Francis, &c.—By Mr. Botfield, from Robert Burton, Esq., against the Salmon Fisheries Bill.—By Mr. Cumming Bruce, from Ministers, Elders, and other Parishioners, of Rothes, in favour of Turnpike Roads (Scotland) Bill.

EDUCATION IN WALES.

MR. WILLIAMS said, that in submitting to the House a Motion to address Her Majesty to institute an inquiry into the state of education in Wales—he might truly say neglected Wales—he felt that he had undertaken a duty, which ought to be performed by a Member representing some part of the Principality, whose local knowledge would enable him more forcibly to point out the great destitution existing in that country, of means for educating the industrious classes of its people; but he should be able to lay before the House such information from sources which could not fail to claim attention, and to convince them that education was in a greatly more neglected state in Wales than any other part of the United Kingdom. The people of that country laboured under a peculiar difficulty from the existence of an ancient language. The gentry and educated class universally speak English, as well as generally the inhabitants of towns; while the farmers, labourers, and other inhabitants of the rural and mining districts speak the Welsh language. This being the language of the poorer classes, important works in literature have not for ages been produced in it; neither have scarcely been translated into it from other languages any works on literature, the arts, and sciences; especially on those important branches of them, mechanics, chemistry, agriculture, and it may be said useful knowledge generally; consequently, although equally industrious with their English neighbours, the Welsh are much behind them in intelligence, in the enjoyment of the comforts of life, and the means of improving their condition. This is universally attributed by intelligent Welshmen, as well as Englishmen and foreigners who have been amongst them, to the want of an English education, which all the common people are most anxious to obtain; but the means afforded to them is lamentably deficient. In many parishes there are no schools; and where there are schools, it is not uncommon for the schoolmasters to be ignorant, uneducated men, and incapable of giving instruction; of this he could furnish numerous proofs: but he would not weary the House, as he only asked for inquiry, which would bring to light an extent of educational destitution in Wales that would call for the interference of the House and the Government. Inquiries had been made into the state of education in every part of England, Scotland, and Ireland, under the authority of the Committee of Council for Education, and most elaborate reports had been made by the gentlemen appointed; much valuable information was also obtained from the inspectors of factories, the Poor Law Com-

missioners, and inspectors of mines, on the state of education in England; but only one parish in Wales had been visited and reported upon. Why had Wales been thus neglected in so marked a manner? He was sure no satisfactory explanation could be given. Before he called the attention of the House to Mr. Tremenheere's report on that parish, he would refer to a statement made by the Rev. Mr. Griffiths, President of the Dissenting College at Brecon: that gentleman, from his position, had extensive means of information on the state of education in Wales. He said there were in that country 250,000 children under the age of fifteen, who ought to be receiving the blessings of education; but of that number, only 70,000 attended schools, and the education a large proportion of these received was so inferior, as to be little better than nominal. There were, then, 180,000 children who did not attend any day schools; and, as he emphatically said, whose immortal spirits were deprived of that guide they should receive from a moral and religious education. Mr. Tremenheere, who has been employed by the Committee of Council for Education, and whose able reports prove his high qualification for the discharge of the duties entrusted to him, was sent in the beginning of 1840, soon after the Newport riots, to inquire into the state of education in that neighbourhood. He visited four parishes in Monmouthshire, and the parish of Merthyr-Tydvil in Glamorganshire, which contain an aggregate population of 85,000, of whom 17,000 were children, who, he said, ought to be at school. His report states, that there were in those parishes forty-seven day schools for elementary education, and thirty-three dame schools for children from three to five years of age; the number of children attending all the schools was 3,308; after allowing that 5,600 children of masters, agents, and superior workmen went to schools elsewhere, there remained 8,026 who went to no schools at all: five of the schools are under the care of females; sixteen of the masters have been unsuccessful in some retail trade; eleven of the masters have been miners, or labourers disabled by accidents or bad health; ten of the masters had received some instruction with a view of becoming schoolmasters; four of the masters were dissenting ministers; and one of the masters was a clerk of a parish church. That the children's books were generally soiled and torn, and often mere fragments consisting of a few soiled leaves; that the school rooms were ill-adapted, and in a few only did the size and cleanliness of the room, and the demeanour and qualifications of the master, afford a probability that the instruction sought to be given, would be imparted with effect; that in those of the highest pretensions the amount of instruction was very scanty—in eighteen only were the principles of English grammar taught; that it is manifest that the instruction afforded to the children of this district, can have no permanent effect in raising their taste and habit, and correcting their disposition. From inquiry made of the clergy of the Established Church, dissenting clergy, agents, and others, the result of the general testimony was, that of the adult working population a large proportion could neither read nor write; that very many had only acquired the art of knowing letters and words; and very few could read with ease and understand what they read. He made inquiry in twenty-four houses adjoining extensive works—seventeen families were Welsh, of whom ten husbands could read Welsh, six of them only imperfectly; seven could not read at all, and none of the seventeen could write; four only of the wives could read the Welsh bible: lamentable as this picture is, he feared it only exhibited the general condition of the common people in Wales: he would ask if such a state of things ought to be permitted to continue; he would venture to say that no other civilized Government in the world would allow any portion of its people to remain in such a condition; yet as a proof of the anxiety of the people to obtain education, it appeared that those who toiled for six days in the week in most laborious work, attended Sunday schools in large numbers, both adult males, and females and children. There were in this district eighty Sunday schools, Welsh and English, connected generally with dissenting congregations; but the instruction in them did not extend much beyond teaching to read. Another gentleman (the Rev. H. W. Bellairs) employed by the Committee of Council for Education, visited this district, who in his Report stated—

"It should be borne in mind that an ill-educated and undisciplined population, like that existing amongst the mines in South Wales, is one that may be found most dangerous to the neighbourhood in which it dwells, and that a band of efficient schoolmasters is kept up at a much less expense than a body of police or soldiery."

He begged particularly to call the attention of the right hon. Baronet the Secre-

tary of State for the Home Department to this statement. It pointed out, that the moral power of the schoolmaster was a more economical and effectual instrument for governing this people than the bayonet. Contrast their mental degradation with their physical condition, no portion of the people of this country received higher wages. The highest class of workmen obtained 25*s.* to 60*s.* a week, and the common labourers 12*s.* to 18*s.* ; the steady men generally earned the higher wages, yet the instances were rare of their making any savings ; this was to be attributed to their want of education and ignorance; men who were industrious to the last degree, were destitute of all means of mental recreation and enjoyment, therefore their place of resort is the public house. It might be asked why the masters, who counted their gains from the labour of these people by tens, twenties, and fifties of thousands of pounds a year, did not adopt means for improving their mental and moral condition by placing competent schoolmasters amongst them ; some of the masters, much to their credit, did much in this respect, but as a body they did but little. The cause of their apathy, Mr. Tremenheere rather plainly ascribes to be, that mental ingenuity was not so much required in their occupations as manual labour ; he (Mr. Williams) lamented to see this indifference exhibited towards an industrious people, by whose labour such masses of wealth were produced. He expressed with regret his belief, that the landlords of Wales had also greatly neglected their duty in aiding to educate the people. If they had been compelled by law to establish and maintain efficient schools in every parish, as were the landlords of Scotland, they would have been repaid tenfold by the improved condition of their estates, by an intelligent superior tenantry. As a proof of the indifference of the landlords and those engaged in mineral productions, and it might be said the richer class generally, towards educating the people, a conference took place in April 1845 of Dissenters, of various sects, in South Wales, to devise means for establishing a better system of education ; they determined the first necessity was competent schoolmasters, and agreed to direct their attention and resources to the formation of a normal school. A committee was appointed for the purpose, who fixed upon Brecon to be the best situation for it, and issued a most heart-stirring address for subscriptions. He held in his hand a list of the contributions, which amounted to 550*l.*, of which 350*l.* appeared to have been collected in small sums from dissenting congregations ; one only of the great iron masters and copper smelters gave 10*l.* each, two great landowners 5*l.* each, who were followed by Mr. Sturge, of Birmingham, 50*l.* The regulations of this normal school, be it observed, strictly exclude sectarianism. The clergy of the Established Church, in the same district, have also used their efforts for the same laudable purpose of supplying the want of schoolmasters by establishing a normal school. At a meeting lately held by them, they pathetically lamented the lukewarmness manifested by the gentry and laity by the small amount of their contributions. Such lamentable testimony precludes all hope of an improvement on the present miserable system of education in that country, without the interference of Government. In contradistinction to this apathy and indifference, there was amongst the people themselves an intense and universal desire to learn the English language. They know that it is the language which affords the best means of improving their condition, and of enabling their children to get on in the world. Were he not fortified by strong proofs of this, he might appear to the House to be overstating this desire ; he could refer to numerous authorities, but he would only quote three or four who were well known to the House and the country, whose testimony could not be impugned. The Commissioners appointed by the Crown to inquire into the management of Turnpike Trusts in South Wales, and into the causes of the late Rebecca disturbances, stated in their Report that—

"It would be improper to pass unnoticed amongst the causes which affect the social condition of the people, the ignorance of the English language which pervades so large a portion of the country—the facts which have come to our knowledge preclude us from regarding this circumstance in any other light than as a great drawback upon the advancement of the community. It practically presents obstacles to the efficient working of many laws and institutions, particular instances of which have been brought under our notice ; we need hardly advert to the difficulties which it has long opposed to the Established Church, and to the administration of justice, as an impediment to social intercourse. It excludes a large portion of the community from the career of advancement or change of occupation ; and it prevents the development of their minds by restricting them to those very scanty sources of information which their native language affords. We have no reason to believe, however, that any feelings of national jealousy or prejudice exist, which would prompt the uneducated classes to resist the attempt to

give extensive instruction in the English language; on the contrary, we have been assured that they regard the latter in a spirit that does credit to their sagacity, as the language of advancement and promotion, and that they gladly embrace any opportunity of giving their children the advantage of acquiring it; but the means afforded them of satisfying their prevalent desire of superadding to their own a knowledge of the English language, fall far short of the demand. The means of instruction of the children of the poor, and even those who may be styled the middle classes, are lamentably small. Endowed institutions are but few, and thinly scattered. The church is crippled, and individual effort has hitherto done but little. The consequence is, that not only the children of the labourers, but of the large class of working farmers, are almost beyond the reach of mental improvement. It is needless to remark how greatly such a state of things is calculated to minister to those prejudices and misconceptions to which so much of the recent excitement of the country may be justly attributed."

This evidence came from a quarter that called for the highest consideration; for the gentlemen who signed this Report were the right hon. Frankland Lewis, the hon. R. Clive, M.P., and Mr. Cripps, M.P. Should their Report induce the House to agree to his Motion, and the result of the inquiry proposed by it should lead to Government interference, as he thought it could not fail to do, the benefits they would confer could not be estimated. He called the attention of the Home Secretary to a most important statement made by these distinguished gentlemen, "that a want of a knowledge of the English language practically presented an obstacle to the administration of justice in that country." He would now quote the opinion of the Commissioner sent by *The Times* newspaper to inquire into the causes of the Rebecca disturbances in Wales: he resided in that country a considerable time, he was a gentleman of high education and talent, a barrister, and possessed a mind peculiarly adapted for investigating such circumstances; he was the same gentleman who was sent by *The Times* to Ireland, and who had written such able reports from that country. Mr. Foster said:—

"Before I bid adieu to the Principality, about which I have written so much, and where I have sojourned so long, let me recur to a subject to which I also alluded in a recent letter—the lamentable deficiency of education amongst its people. During a residence of five months in Carmarthenshire, in which period I have been over every portion of it and the adjacent counties, I may be presumed to have seen much of the population. Amongst them in a period of excitement, perpetually mixing and conversing with large bodies of them, I have had opportunities rarely possessed of observing their character, their capabilities, and their usual attainments—concluding my temporary visit amongst them with a tour on the route of Her Majesty's Commissioners through the counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke, Cardigan, Radnor, Glamorgan, and Brecon, I have been able to mark by comparison the advantages which a superior education, consequent on a knowledge of the English language, has given to the inhabitants of some districts over those of others. But why, it may be asked, harp so much on the necessity of learning English? Because it is the road, the only road to knowledge. Because it is the road to improvement and civilization; and because it is the road to advancement to the poor Welshman."

Referring to the Newport and Rebecca riots, and the severe punishment they brought upon so many people, Mr. Foster says:—

"But how is this to be remedied? By education; an extensive, a sound, a feasible plan of education, where English is the oral means of communication; teach the people a knowledge of the useful sciences through its medium. The principle which is at the bottom of the acquisition of knowledge, is a motive of self-interest to attain it. The Welsh have this; every farmer desires, if he can only obtain the means, to teach his son English, because he knows that in every branch of industry, it is the language of promotion; but increase this motive of self-interest by giving increased facilities to inter-communication, give an impetus to the spread of the English language, and to a diffusion of the knowledge of the arts and comforts of civilized life amongst the poor Welshmen, which, while it improves the face of their beautiful country, will make them a more happy, a less servile—a superior people."

That evidence was most important; and still more valuable in reference to the same subject was an extract which he (Mr. Williams) would read to the House, from the charge to his clergy of one of the most distinguished Prelates on the bench of bishops; a prelate eminent for learning and ability; pious and universally beloved; he meant the Bishop of St. David's:—

"To no department of your office are these remarks more applicable than to that which is connected with the education of the children of the poor. In no other way may so much be effected with such slender means. It is not with this, as with some of our other institutions, that they are commonly least valued in proportion as they are least needed. It is, I believe, very rarely indeed that the poor are found to be insensible to the benefits of education, even when they have received none themselves. They are anxious, sometimes the more so on that account, that their children should be better instructed; and many, we have reason to hope, are the cases in which the parents have been indebted to their children for religious knowledge and principles, which they would never have acquired without their assistance and example. This is a consideration which opens a clear prospect of an almost unlimited extension of the most salutary influence to those who are able and willing to wield this powerful instrument."

Was not this one of the most astounding

testimonies to be found in any production in the English language in favour of the power of education—the power which knowledge gave? And was not the House called upon to remove from that portion of the United Kingdom in which it existed the reproach to legislation furnished in the fact that the order of nature was reversed, and that the parents were taught by the children? It was, he believed, the first time that the House of Commons had taken into consideration the state of education in Wales; and it would not he hoped be trespassing on their time if he read one more document, shedding additional light upon the subject. It was an extract from an article in one of the leading Welsh newspapers, and from the pen of the proprietor and editor—a gentleman of very extensive attainments, and who from his position, and from communication with all classes, had had the opportunity of acquiring a large amount of that particular knowledge necessary to the comprehension of the question before the House. In speaking of the disturbed state of Wales, and of the manner in which it had been spoken of in the House of Commons, he made the following remarks:—

"In a late debate it was said, in alluding to the wide-spread spirit of agrarian turbulence in this part of the country, that such a violation of the laws as South Wales is the scene of betokened a general uneasiness, the cause of general disaffection. Now we will venture to affirm, without reference to any periodical written in the Welsh language, that if the people had been acquainted with the English language, had had proper instruction provided, instead of being as they now are a prey to designing hypocrites, with religion on their lips and wickedness in their hearts—a prey, at the same time, to ignorance of their rights, and to the penal consequences of anarchical proceedings,—they would be at this moment, from the geographical and other peculiar advantages of their position, the happiest as well as the most peaceful and most prosperous population in the world."

He could quote other able articles from the pen of the same gentleman, showing the deplorable state of education in Wales, and the evils it produced to its people, in retarding the improvement of their social condition. Was it not a remarkable fact, that, in the parts of the kingdom where education was most neglected, there the greatest poverty and most numerous evils prevailed? Why had Government done so little for education in England and Wales, and so much for Scotland and Ireland? If the Welsh had the same advantages for education as the Scotch, they would, instead of appearing a distinct people, in no respect differ from the English; would it not, then, be wisdom and sound policy to send the English schoolmaster amongst them? What had been the consequences of an improved and a good system of education in Scotland? It was to be seen in the superior character of her population. As early as 1663 an Act was passed to establish schools in every parish in Scotland, to be maintained by an assessment on the land in each. How well had the landowners been repaid for this charge, in having, by means of the superior education thus afforded, a most intelligent tenantry, and a population not exceeded by any nation in agriculture, in manufactures, or commerce! Education had done more to raise the character of the people, and to enrich that country, especially its landowners, than had been done in any other country of Europe. Besides having a parochial school in each of the 922 parishes, there were, in 1842, 2,172 other schools in Scotland, which gives more than three schools on an average to each parish; but still not content with this extended means for education, the Committee on Education of the General Assembly issued an order in 1844 to the parochial clergy, to make returns of the state of the schools in each parish, and to report whether they were sufficient for the education of the poorer population. Those returns were forwarded to the Committee of Council on Education sitting in London, by whom they were ordered to be investigated; and the result showed that, in 559 parishes, 329 more schools were required, although there were already 3,047 schools in that country, for educating a population of 2,600,000. Every means for giving efficiency to those schools were adopted; the Committee of Council for Education had appointed two inspectors to overlook the whole of the schools, and to superintend the system of education generally in Scotland. There were four Universities in that country, in each of which were Colleges, affording a most enlightened and liberal education, which, to a great extent, were maintained by annual votes of public money. Though he (Mr. Williams) had very humbly endeavoured to enforce economy in the expenditure of public money, he had never objected or complained of its application for the purposes of education in any part of the United Kingdom, believing, as he did, that an educated people could be governed easier and much cheaper than an uneducated ignorant people, besides the

vast social benefits and moral power it conferred in a national point of view. He rejoiced that much had also been done for education in Ireland, which reflected the highest credit on the Government. They had established in that country an excellent national system of education; a system which in time would be the means of removing and eradicating many, if not all, of the evils which had hitherto retarded the progress of Irish prosperity. So early as the reign of Henry VIII. an Act had passed for the establishment of parochial schools in Ireland; and other Statutes on the same subject were passed in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, George I., George II., and George III.; but the system acted upon, being of a sectarian character, was unsuccessful. In 1806, an Act was passed conferring power on the Lord Lieutenant to appoint Commissioners to inquire into the funds and revenues, granted by public and private donation, for the purposes of education, and into the state and condition of all schools in Ireland, and to suggest a plan for the general education of the lower orders of the people; a very elaborate and expensive inquiry was made, and the Commissioners made a very voluminous Report in 1812. In answer to an Address to the Crown from that House, a Royal Commission was again appointed in 1825 for inquiring into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions established for education; for ascertaining what regulations may be fit to be established with respect to the parochial schools, and for reporting as to the measures which can be adopted for extending generally to all classes of the people the benefit of education in Ireland. That Commission also made an elaborate Report, which, as well as the Report of the former Commission, was in 1828 referred to a Committee of that House, who, as they stated, entered upon the duty they were called upon to perform, with a full sense of the importance of the subject. Founded upon the Report of that Committee, a Board of Commissioners was appointed in 1831, at the head of whom was placed the Duke of Leinster, for the purpose of establishing and carrying out a general system of national education in Ireland. The result has been that, in 1839, there were 1,581 national schools, which were attended by 205,000 children, which had increased in 1843 to 3,153 schools, in which 395,000 were educated. The Commissioners state that, by the end of 1844, nearly 500,000 children would be receiving the blessings of education in the national schools of Ireland. He (Mr. Williams) trusted their progress would be onward, and that every child in Ireland would in a short time be receiving a good education. There are also normal schools for teaching schoolmasters upon a superior system. They are presided over by professors who give lectures on the art of teaching and conducting schools, the English language, literature, history, geography, political economy, natural philosophy, and chemistry; successful experiments are also being made of making those schools instrumental in diffusing agricultural knowledge. There was also voted last Session 100,000*l.* for the erection of three Colleges for the education of the middle classes in Ireland, which are to be endowed, with the College of Maynooth, by an annual grant of 50,000*l.* from the public money. He mentioned this with the greatest gratification, and had given his support to all these measures; but he could not but compare what the Government had done for education in Scotland and Ireland with its almost utter neglect of education in England and Wales, and more particularly in Wales. Since 1839, 248,000*l.* had been voted for education in Great Britain; of which the five counties of South Wales, where the Rebecca disturbances took place, containing a population of 500,000, only received 2,176*l.*; while Staffordshire, with about an equal population, similarly employed in minerals and agriculture, received 14,575*l.*, or seven times more; Cheshire more than seven times more, in proportion to its population. The only College in Wales was St. David's, at Lampeter; 400*l.* was the sum voted last year for the support of education in it, although its funds have been strongly represented as totally insufficient. This is the seminary at which most of the clergy of South Wales are educated; for, in consequence of their Church having been despoiled of nearly all her revenues, by wholesale spoliation in the confiscating times of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Elizabeth, and James I., the livings were not of sufficient value to incur the expense of an Oxford and Cambridge education. This might be pleaded in excuse for the clergy of the Established Church doing so little for the education of their flocks; they had not fulfilled their duty, they might do much more, but their means were much crippled; few of them received the rectorial tithes, which went to lay impropri-

ators. He knew ten parishes in Carmarthenshire, the tithes of which amount to 5,985*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum, of which 5,266*l.* went to lay impropriators, and 719*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* to the clergy. One of those parishes contained 12,000 inhabitants, with two large churches, the tithes of which amounted to 977*l.* a year: 970*l.* went to the lay impropriator and 7*l.* to the clergy. There were fifteen parishes nearly adjoining in Cardiganshire whose tithes amounted to 6,000*l.* per annum, 4,500*l.* went to a lay impropriator residing in the West of England, and 1,500*l.* for the maintenance of twenty-one clergymen serving those parishes. There was one other subject to which he would call the attention of the House. It was worthy of their most serious consideration, especially that of the Government; namely, the impediment thrown in the way of the administration of justice in Wales, from the people not understanding English. He could state occurrences from this cause that would excite mirth and the deepest sorrow. The Judges, and all persons concerned in the administration of justice, complain of the difficulties they have to encounter, and often have cause to lament them. The laws, and the forms and proceedings in the administration of them in courts of justice, are in English, a language not understood by the great body of the common people; a person may be charged with having committed a crime which, if convicted, would subject him to the severest penalty of the law; if the witnesses against him can speak English they give their evidence in that language, if not, their evidence is interpreted, the counsel for and against him address the court, and the judge sums up in English, and if convicted pass sentence upon him, perhaps of death; the whole of the proceedings being unintelligible to him. He was told by an old barrister that he had often known juries give verdicts in direct opposition to the evidence and the charge of the Judge, and always for acquittal; when asked the reason, they accounted for it from their imperfect knowledge of English, and thought it best to err on the right side. Another barrister informed him, that he was present in court when the Judge was passing sentence of death on a prisoner in a solemn impressive manner; when he came to the most awful part just at the close, the prisoner asked a person near him what the Judge was saying. On the North Wales Circuit last year a person of the name of Griffith Hughes, who had been out on bail, surrendered to take his trial at the assizes held at Beaumaris in the county of Anglesea, for a felonious assault with attempt to maim; on a jury being impannelled and sworn to try him, it was noticed to the court that eleven of them did not understand English, and consequently the oath they had taken, upon which the Judge observed that the foreman (the individual who understood English) could explain the case to his fellow jurors; and not a little he had to explain; for the witnesses for the defence deposed in English, the counsel on both sides addressed the jury in English, and the Judge summed up in English. The result was, the foreman audibly and clearly returned a verdict against the prisoner, and the Judge sentenced him to four months' imprisonment and hard labour. The next morning the prisoner's attorney made application to the court, stating that the eleven jurors who did not understand English were not convinced of the prisoner's guilt, and had instructed their foreman and interpreter to give in a verdict of acquittal. Mr. Baron Parke smiled, and told the attorney to forward an affidavit to the Secretary of State. The jury signed a memorial to Sir James Graham. Much delay necessarily took place, and the man was detained in prison nearly the whole period. He could relate many more such occurrences. A parallel to such a state of things could not be found under the most despotic Government in any civilized country. Was it not a mockery of administering law and justice? The House and the Government, he was sure, would not permit such a stain upon our national character to continue. We prided ourselves more on the purity with which the laws are administered in our courts of justice, than on any other institution of the country. The people placed in this anomalous, this unfortunate position, did not want us to translate the laws into, or to administer them in their language, but they ask and pray us to send the English schoolmaster amongst them to teach them the language in which the laws are written, that they may understand and obey them. Energetic means were in operation for giving all classes of people a good education in all other civilized countries, whatever may be their form of Government, from the democratic republics of America and Switzerland, to the despotic Governments of Prussia and Austria. He would not detail the excellent systems adopted in those countries, especially in Holland and

Bavaria, but he called particular attention to what had been done in France. Soon after the wise sovereign of that country was placed in power, a national system of education was commenced; a Minister of Public Instruction was appointed, a law was passed to compel each department to establish a normal school; in 1843 there were 76 normal schools for teaching schoolmasters, and 16 for teaching schoolmistresses; 52 of these schools have land attached to them for teaching agriculture and horticulture; there were 87 chief inspectors and 113 sub-inspectors of schools, and 50,986 schools; 500,000*l.* of public money was voted in 1842, and the vote of this year was upwards of 700,000*l.* to aid in supporting these schools for the education of a population of 34,000,000. In Great Britain there are five normal schools, seven inspectors, and 75,000*l.* voted last year for the education of 20,000,000 of people. This is a humiliating contrast; such a noble example should stimulate the Government to establish a sound system of education for England and Wales. He (Mr. Williams) was sure, whatever might be the cost, it would be saved tenfold in the expense of the army, police, and prisons. If such a system had been established in Wales, the people would have been educated, and such occurrences as those of Newport and the Rebecca disturbances, and their lamentable consequences, would not have taken place; the people would have redressed their grievances by constitutional means instead of violence. The public expense of two special commissions sent to try the offenders would have been spared, as well as the severe punishments of many, and the distress brought on their families, and the pain it must have caused the Judges to punish men for offending the laws, who did not understand the language in which they are written, nor the language in which their severe sentence was passed upon them. The expense of sending large bodies of London police would not have been incurred, nor of establishing military stations all over that country where a soldier of the standing army was before unknown. The expenditure now going on of 140,000*l.* upon barracks at Newport, Brecon, and Bristol, would be saved, as well as the cost of maintaining soldiers in them. He (Mr. Williams) wished he could persuade the hon. Member for Carmarthenshire (Mr. S. Davies) to prevail upon his brother magistrates of that county to dismiss their recently established police, which, according to an estimate he saw, consists of 57 policemen at a cost of 4,700*l.* a year, and take legal power to expend the same sum on education, which would place an English schoolmaster in every parish at a salary of 50*l.* a year. From his knowledge of the people, he would assert that the moral power the schoolmaster would create, and the parish constable, would maintain peace and protect life and property in that county, as effectually as in any spot in Britain; the whole people would aid them. They know the police are for coercion, and that the schoolmaster would give to their children an English education, the means of acquiring that knowledge which would lay the wide world open to them to improve their condition and for their advancement in life, instead of being confined by their native language in comparative poverty to their native hills and valleys. A good sound system of education in Wales would produce inestimable benefits; it would raise up an intelligent population, who, by the superior skill which it would bring forth, would greatly increase the productiveness and wealth of their country, whose mountains abound in rich minerals, and valleys in rich soil, now to a large extent undeveloped. That reproach would no longer attach to the Government and the country, so forcibly stated by the Queen's Commissioners, that in this portion of Her Majesty's dominions—

> "The people's ignorance of the English language, practically prevents the working of the laws and institutions, and impedes the administration of justice."

Nor, as said by the learned Bishop of St. David's, would the very order of nature be reversed, that uneducated parents were indebted to their children, who had received the blessings of education, for instruction in religious knowledge and moral principles, which they never would have acquired without their assistance and example. He thanked the House for the attention they had given to him and moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that She will be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the state of Education in the Principality of Wales, especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes of acquiring a knowledge of the English language."

Sir J. GRAHAM said: I shall not on this occasion occupy much time in making the few observations which the speech and Motion of the hon. Member for Coventry have rendered necessary; and I beg, in the first place, frankly to state, that though

I do not concur with him in all, yet I go along with him in much that he has stated. I agree with him, for example, when he says that the establishment of national education in Ireland has been a great benefit to that part of the United Kingdom. My opinion quite coincides with his, when he pronounces the existence of a system of national education in Ireland to be a very happy circumstance; and I am not prepared to contradict his statement when he asserts, that if we were to specify any one source more than another to which we might rationally trace the intellectual superiority of the people of Scotland, it would be their system of parochial education. I also agree with the hon. Member for Coventry when he alleges that the ignorance of the English language which unhappily prevails in the Principality, presents a very serious barrier to the administration of the law. No man can be more strongly persuaded than I am of this truth, that a knowledge of the English language would be highly conducive to the welfare of the working classes throughout the whole of Wales. I entertain no doubt whatever that their ignorance greatly interferes with their prosperity, and prevents their rising in the scale of society; and I regret to say, that in some parts of the Principality the ignorance of the people not only lowers them intellectually, but depraves their moral qualities. In making these several admissions, however, I must at the same time take the liberty of saying, that the hon. Member has not done justice even to those measures which Her Majesty's Government have thought it fitting to adopt with reference to the state of education in Wales. Justice has hardly been done to the steps that were taken immediately after the unhappy events which occurred in the year 1839. It was, I have no doubt, then felt—and the feeling appeared to have been acted on—that the time had arrived when it became the duty of the Government, much more than it had ever previously been, to make strenuous efforts to improve the moral condition of the population of Wales. From that time forward, I can very confidently assure the hon. Member and the House, that the attention of the responsible advisers of the Crown has been sedulously directed towards the great object of improving the physical condition of the working classes throughout the United Kingdom, and more especially in that portion of the country which forms the immediate subject of the Motion now before the House. The physical condition of the people being advanced a step, we are not unprepared to admit that their social, moral, and religious condition does require alteration. We are now engaged in providing for the physical welfare of the working classes; and I have no doubt that their moral and social condition will force themselves upon the attention of Parliament. In Ireland, a system of national education has been set on foot: would to God that we could agree amongst ourselves as to the means of effectually extending it! but at the same time, nothing shall induce me to despair of its eventual success. I do not overlook the fact that many schemes of education have been proposed, and these several schemes have appeared to interfere with each other; doubtless they have done so to some extent, but this collision is far better than a total neglect of all education. Immediately after the events of 1839, it became very evident that there was a great want of education in the mining districts. Mr. Tremenheere was soon afterwards instructed to direct his attention to the subject, and to supply information to the Government upon the state of education in Wales. The hon. Member has quoted from the Report made by Mr. Tremenheere in 1840. The Government to which the noble Lord opposite belonged directed that a circular letter should be written to the mining districts, in order not only to obtain information, but as a preliminary step to the measures regarding education which they contemplated. I propose, with the permission of the House, to quote parts of that letter; first, for the purpose of showing that the attention of Government has been directed to the subject; and, secondly, for the purpose of showing the appeal that has been made. The letter to which I refer is dated the 25th of March, 1840, and a portion of it is in these words :—

"The Committee of Council, being anxious to give immediate effect to their wish to provide the means of an efficient elementary education for this population, are desirous to encourage the erection of school-houses, and the settlement of well-instructed and religious men as teachers of elementary schools, throughout this district; and, feeling assured that you concur with them in considering such measures as highly important to the future welfare of the labouring population by which you are surrounded, and not less to the security of property and to the peace of society, are disposed to offer you and the other persons locally interested, who are disposed to co-operate, their assistance for the establishment of a school in your immediate neighbourhood.

"If, further, the means can be provided for defraying the annual expenses of the schools, so as

to secure the services of a teacher, trained either in the normal school of the National Society, or of the British and Foreign School Society, or in one of the normal schools of the Church of Scotland, or in some other school which their Lordships may approve, they will be disposed to afford you one-half of the estimated expense of erecting a school-house according to the plan, specification, and estimate which you may select, upon the transmission of the usual certificate."

The letter then goes on to say:—

"Considering the peculiar circumstances of the district, my Lords are disposed to exceed the usual limit of the grants made for the erection of school-houses, provided they can be assured, by the nature of the plan selected, the form of the trust-deed, and the amount of the annual income provided for a teacher, that the school will be permanently supported and efficiently conducted."

I am quite ready to admit that this does not remove the necessity for further exertion; but it shows that some exertion has been made. To eighty-five schools, the Committee of the Council has contributed 10,500*l.*, which sum has been principally employed in building. Mr. Tremenheere visited the district in which these sums have been spent, and his visit quite confirmed the utility and necessity of periodical inspection. From his reports, as well as from other evidence, this was clearly established, that, comparing the state of education in 1839 with the condition of the people in that respect, when Mr. Tremenheere made his last Report, the population of Wales has made a decided progress. One proof of this improvement is to be seen in the exertions made by an hon. Baronet on the other side of the House, the Member for Merthyr-Tydvil, who at his own expense has made provision for the education of an immense number of the working classes at schools under the immediate superintendence of himself and members of his family. The hon. Baronet built schools for the education of the children of all persons in his employment, and as regards education, no part of England is in better condition. Further, it is well known that Sir Thomas Phillipps built schools at his own expense, and that in others of the mining districts of Wales the means of education has been provided, so that progress has evidently been made in various parts of the Principality. Still, I am by no means indisposed to consent that further inquiry should be made into the state of education in Wales, but I object to thus addressing the Crown for a Special Commission. What I propose is, that inspectors shall immediately be sent by the Committee of the Council to inquire into the means of instruction for the people which exist in the Principality; and the inspectors shall report specially to the Committee of the Council. They will report speedily; and if there should be further necessity for interference, a fresh appeal to the House may be made. A considerable sum has been placed at the disposal of the Committee of the Council; and I hope that the application of that money has been satisfactory to the House; at the same time I assure the House, that I am quite sensible of the vast importance of the question before us. I agree with the hon. Mover, that even the diffusion of a knowledge of the English language in Wales, without anything else, is a matter of great importance, and one which I am most anxious to promote next after the moral and religious character of the people. The difficulty with which we have to contend is, how to reconcile conflicting opinions. I do not wish to discuss a question of this kind incidentally; but I will not to the last moment of my life give up the hope of seeing the condition of the people most materially improved by those means of intellectual cultivation which we are now endeavouring practically to carry out. I can never bring myself to believe that in this matter Government will absolutely fail. I do not think it necessary to detain the House longer upon this subject. If the hon. Member will consent to withdraw his Motion for the present, I pledge myself on behalf of the Government that inspectors shall be sent down into Wales to inquire into the state of education in the Principality, and their Report shall be forthwith laid before the House.

Mr. W. WILLIAMS was perfectly willing to consent to the arrangement proposed by the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet had referred to the amount of public money expended on schools in Wales. Now, it was proper to observe that during the last seven years no less than 285,000*l.* had been applied to educational purposes in England and Wales; but of this sum only 2,176*l.* had been expended in those five counties of Wales where the recent disturbances took place, and which contained a population of half a million; whereas in the county of Stafford, with about the same amount and description of population, no less than 14,500*l.* had been expended.

Mr. WILLIAMS WYNN said, he should be most happy to support any proposal which was calculated to encourage educa-

tion within the Principality. With regard to the district with which the hon. Member for Coventry was chiefly acquainted, he had certainly no knowledge of it. Wales was divided, the north from the south, by a ridge of mountains, which greatly affected the intercourse between the two parts, and separated the one from the other as effectually as the Welsh were separated from the English counties. Although he should feel most thankful for any additional encouragement or improvement of the schools in the Principality, he owed it to the class of landowners of North Wales to say that the subject had not been neglected by them as much as the hon. Member for Coventry seemed to think. He could state, from his own knowledge, that there was hardly a parish in which exertions had not been made, and were now making, to extend education amongst the people; that in promoting this object, the conduct of the Established clergy had been most praiseworthy; and, what was a most gratifying fact, they had been seconded—but he would not say seconded, for they were equalled—by the exertions of the Wesleyans, Baptists, and other classes of dissenters. Some parishes might be comparatively neglected; but he did not know of one in which there was the least hostility manifested to the object in view, or where any other feeling prevailed than that of a desire to promote education. In his opinion the principal cause of the deficiency of education in Wales was to be found in the great extent of the parishes, in many of which the people were obliged to walk five miles to get to the parish church, and that the greatest advantage, so far as facilitating education was concerned, would arise from the division of those parishes. With respect to the mining population of North Wales—and no doubt the same observation would equally apply to the same description of population in South Wales—he should say that the deficiency of education might be attributed to the rapid increase of that population, which had augmented at a rate which it was hardly possible for individual exertions to meet. He believed that if the Legislature directed its attention to this important subject, it would have the effect of calling into operation the voluntary efforts of individuals throughout the Principality.

MR. DAVIES said, that he was acquainted with a large number of parishes in Wales, in which schools had been established by the landowners, though he admitted there were also many in which a great want of education was experienced.

MR. WYSE was very happy to hear that there existed in Wales a desire for increased facilities of education, and he was equally pleased to learn that there existed, on the part of the Government, a feeling of anxiety to administer to the requirements of the Welsh people in this respect. It was impossible to overstate the value and importance of education. His own experience of Ireland enabled him to bear testimony to the great improvement which of late years had taken place in the tastes, habits, and feelings of the Irish people; and much of the advantage which resulted from that improvement he attributed to that organized system of education which had been recently established amongst them, and which might indeed be termed, with the utmost propriety, "national," inasmuch as that it was gradually extending its influence through the length and breadth of the land, and that its operation had proved in the last degree beneficial to the best interests of all classes of the community. It was not as yet, however, that the full benefit of the system of education pursued in Ireland, under the sanction of the Government, could be properly understood or appreciated; but when ten years more had elapsed, and when those who were now the boys, would be the men of Ireland, then indeed the advantages of a proper system of mental culture would be perceptible, not alone in the increased amount of information possessed by the people, but in their greater order, their juster regard for life and property, their improved habits both of action and thought, their more refined feelings, and above all, in that higher degree of perfection which they would assuredly be found to have attained in those moral and religious virtues which ought to be the basis of every system of education, and without which all knowledge was of little avail. The habits, tastes, and feelings of the entire population would be seen to be in the highest degree improved, and in that improvement would be found the best possible security for the future prosperity and happiness of the country. He most cordially concurred in the hope expressed by the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that the day was not far distant when a system of national education would be established in England on a scale com-

mensurate with the requirements of our population.

Motion withdrawn.

FROST, WILLIAMS, AND JONES.

MR. T. S. DUNCOMBE, previous to bringing forward the Motion of which he had given notice, for an Address to Her Majesty, praying the extension of the Royal prerogative of mercy to Frost, Williams, and Jones, thought it right to apprize the House that he was charged with the presentation of 249 petitions, signed by no less than 1,400,000 persons, praying that the House would be pleased to interfere on behalf of those ill-advised and unfortunate men, with a view to procure their restoration to their homes and families. He would not weary the House by particularizing the names of all the towns in England and Scotland from which those petitions had emanated; but he would take the liberty of reading the names of a few of the places, that the House might understand that the petitions in question embodied the feelings of the inhabitants of some of the most important localities in the Empire. He was entrusted with petitions from the following localities, independently of others far too numerous to specify by name: Exeter, Lambley, Nottingham, Clayton (York), Manchester (two petitions), Crewkerne (Somerset), Ashburton, Birmingham (two petitions), Halifax, Reading, Dundee (two petitions, one 2,418), Huddersfield, Darlington, Plymouth, Edinburgh, Stainland, Leeds (two petitions), Bradford (two petitions), Radford (Notts), Haworth (Yorkshire), Stanhope, Linlithgow, Bowden, (Roxburgh), Paisley, Bocking and Braintree, Bacup (3,000), Wigton, Stoke-upon-Trent, Oxford, Old Basford, Shoreditch, Sudbury, Preston, Whitechapel, Derby, Redditch, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bury, (Lancashire), Clackmannan, Cleckheaton, Hull, Bradford (9,000), Manchester (40,446), Salford (10,710), Tavistock, Newport (Town Council), Hanley, Collumpton, Devizes, Milborne Port, Chorley, London (two petitions), Radford, Staley Bridge, St. Luke's, Newton-upon-Ayr, Crayford (253), Warwick, Hamilton, Glasgow, Wigan (3,370), Ayrshire, Haslingden (Lancashire), Prescot, Chepstow, Tower Hamlets (760), Mr. Howitt (author), Thomas Cooper (ditto), Sheffield (13,000), Bradford (Wilts), Nuneaton (Warwick), Stafford, Kidderminster, (1,003), West Riding, Todmorden (3,040), Warley, Bexley, Leeds (32,500: Dr. Hook, the vicar, twelve members of the town-council, the chairman and vice-chairman of the board of guardians, and several of the members signed it.) He also had the honour of presenting petitions, signed by the chairmen on behalf of various numerously attended meetings which had been held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other localities. It had been represented to him—and he believed with truth — that the petitions which he had to present that evening embodied in the aggregate the feelings and wishes of about 3,000,000 of British subjects. It was impossible that he could find time for a distinct or separate allusion to all those documents, but there was one of them to which he was anxious to make a special reference, because of its peculiar and important characteristics. He alluded to the petition which had emanated from Abergavenny, in Wales, to which were attached 633 signatures. Amongst these signatures were to be found the names of six of the jurymen who had tried Frost, Williams, and Jones. The gentleman who had procured these last-mentioned signatures stated that he had not been able to make out more than six of the twelve who composed the jury, but that those six expressed a feeling of strong sympathy for the unhappy men who were affected by their verdict, and did not make the slightest scruple to attach their names to the petitions. Three of the jury had died since the trial, two could not be found out, and as for the sixth, there was no use in asking him for his signature, for he could not write. He was a man of then ame of Christopher, but he was so hopelessly ignorant that he could not tell whether his proper appellation was John Christopher, or Christopher John. In all these petitions the prayer was merely to the effect that the House would be pleased to use its influence on behalf of these misguided men, in the hope of inducing Her Majesty to make them objects for the exercise of her Royal prerogative of mercy. The petitioners did not mean to justify or palliate in the slightest degree the criminal conduct of Frost, Williams, and Jones. What they said was, that looking to the circumstances of the peculiar case of these men, and having regard to the circumstances of the country generally at the period of their trial, and having before their minds the examples of other persons who had been made objects for the exercise of the Royal mercy, and in whose behalf that prerogative had been extended without injury to the interests of the community at

large—what they (the petitioners) respectfully contended for was, that having regard to all those things, they were warranted in entertaining a hope that the House would address the Queen on behalf of Frost, Williams, and Jones, and beg of Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to show them some degree of mercy. If he could prevail on the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department to give, not to say an assurance, but even the slightest intimation for himself and his Colleagues in office, that these humane supplications should receive at the hands of the Government that attentive consideration to which they were unquestionably entitled, he would not trespass for one moment longer on the attention of the House, but would leave the prayers of the petitions to be dealt with by Her Majesty's Ministers as they might think fit, feeling confidently assured, that not only would justice be done to the petitioners, but that that description of justice would be awarded to Frost and his companions which was consistent with the principles of a wise and sound policy—justice tempered with mercy. If an engagement of this kind were given by the right hon. Baronet on the part of the Ministry, he (Mr. Duncombe) would desist from his task, nor trespass for one moment longer on the attention of the House. He paused for a reply.

SIR J. GRAHAM thought that it would be the better course for the hon. Member to make his statement. He would then take occasion to explain what were his views on the subject.

MR. DUNCOMBE said, that after what had fallen from the hon. Baronet, he had no alternative but to submit to the House the Motion of which he had given notice:—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to take into Her Majesty's most gracious consideration the Petitions of the People presented during the present Session of Parliament, in favour of a restoration to their native land of Frost, Williams, and Jones."

He would trespass for as short a period as possible on the time and attention of the House, while he endeavoured to explain what his views were upon this subject. He was fully cognizant of the difficulties and dangers he had to contend with. He knew very well the alarm and the prejudices which a question of this kind was calculated to evoke, and he also knew very well the magnitude and importance of the obstacle he had to encounter in the opinion which prevailed amongst very many hon. Members of that House; and prevailed, too, not, he was free to admit, without some warranty in truth, that it was not expedient for the House of Commons to interfere with any of the prerogatives of the Crown, and, least of all with the prerogative of mercy. To this doctrine, in a general sense, he did not object; but he contended that there were cases in which the House of Commons not only might with propriety interfere, but in which they were bound in propriety to do so. Circumstances of a very special and peculiar character might justify and absolutely create the necessity for such an interference on the part of the House of Commons; but while he made this assertion, he was quite free to admit that the Member who sought to procure the exercise of that interference was bound to prove to the satisfaction of the House, that he had not had recourse to this proceeding, until all other means for attaining the end he had in view had been attempted in vain. But surely he was perfectly warranted in asserting that, before the present Motion was introduced, no means had been left unessayed for the accomplishment of the object which was desired to be attained. Nothing had been left undone by the various petitioners who had addressed that House for a series of years past, to induce the Government of the day to procure an extension of the mercy of the Crown to these unhappy men. He was sure that the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department would have no difficulty in admitting, that in the course of last year memorials without end passed through the Home Office, and had been (as it was to be presumed) by the right hon. Baronet himself, laid at the foot of the Throne. But it was all to no purpose. The Government found it impossible to arrive at the opinion that it would be consistent with their public duty to accede to the prayers of the petitioners. He did not complain of this. He was far from desiring to utter a complaint or to cast any censure on the Government for the course which they had felt it their duty to adopt. Bearing in mind the grievous offence of which Frost, Williams, and Jones had been accused and found guilty—the heinous offence of high treason—he was free to admit that no Government would be justified in recommending the extension of pardon to those men hastily, unpremeditatedly, or on light grounds. He

was perfectly ready to acknowledge that a great and unmistakeable manifestation of public opinion inside that House and outside it ought to be exhibited before such a course should be taken; but what he contended for in the present intance was, that in the case of these unhappy men, so strong, so extraordinary, and so universal a demonstration of public feeling had been made in this country as would afford ample justification for a compliance on the part of the Ministry with the prayer of the petitioners. The sympathy in favour of these misguided and unfortunate individuals arose from two causes. In the first place, it proceeded from a doubt which existed in the minds of four-fifths of the population, whether the conviction of these men were altogether legal. There could be no question but that that conviction was involved in great doubt—uncertainty not confined to the uneducated only, or to those who were illiterate and unlearned in the law, but shared, as he could assure the House, by men of the highest intelligence, and even eminent lawyers. And when, moreover, he directed the attention of the House to this fact, that the fifteen Judges had divided six to nine upon one point, and nine to six upon another, would any one say that it was not a matter of doubt whether those men should have been tried at all? The great probability—nay, it almost amounted to a certainty—was, that the men would not have been tried at all, that the issue would not have gone to the jury at all, if the point which was raised in favour of the prisoners by Sir F. Pollock and the hon. and learned Gentleman whom he saw before him (Sir F. Kelly) had been decided by the court *instanter*, instead of being reserved for the decision of the fifteen Judges. He wished to have it expressly understood that he did not find fault with the manner in which the trial had been conducted, in bringing forward this question; he begged also most distinctly to disclaim being actuated by any party feelings whatsoever; and most sincerely did he hope that no party feeling would be permitted to enter into the discussion. The petitions which he had presented that night had been signed by men of all classes, all creeds, and all varieties of political opinion. They were signed without regard to chartism or radicalism, toryism or whiggery; by men of humane feeling, whose principal or sole object in attaching their signatures was, that a measure of mercy might be extended to men whose case they believed would permit of such an exercise of the Royal prerogative, without injury to the interests of the community or the administration of justice. He made no complaint of any one. He admitted that the officers of the Crown who prosecuted in the case of Frost and his companions, conducted their case in a manner which reflected honour on themselves and their profession; for they acted throughout with moderation, temper, and sound discretion; and it was also unquestionable that the prisoners had been defended with the utmost ability by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, and also by the learned personage who was now Chief Baron. But this was not the question at issue. It was well known that an objection was taken at the trial, which the presiding Judges did not feel themselves at liberty to decide; and which was accordingly reserved for the opinion of the fifteen Judges. However, if the court had been pressed for its decision without delay, the subsequently-expressed opinions of Mr. Baron Parke and Mr. Justice Williams left little ground for doubting but that the prisoners would have been then and there acquitted. But the point was reserved for the fifteen Judges, and the trial went on. What was the point? He hoped that none of the hon. Gentlemen then listening to him would ever be put on his trial for high treason; but if such a calamity should ever befall any of them, it might be as well that they should be provided beforehand with this piece of information—that it was their right to have delivered to them, at one and the same time (that was to say, ten clear days before the trial), a copy of the indictment, and with it a list of the jury, and a list of the witnesses proposed to be examined. Now the objection raised by counsel on behalf of the prisoners was, that these documents had not been given at one and the same time; and he believed there could be no doubt whatever as to the truth of the assertion. The copy of the indictment was furnished on a Thursday; but the lists of the jury and of the witnesses not until the Tuesday following, five days being thus allowed to intervene. Six of the Judges decided that the objection was altogether fatal to the trial and conviction, and nine decided that the objection would have been good and valid if taken at the time, but that, when made, it came too late. Consequently, there were nine out of the fifteen who were positively of opinion that the trial would not have been good in point of fact, if the objection were taken in

time, but the objection was not taken in time. What was Sir Frederick Pollock's argument?—and he must say, that the conduct of Sir Frederick Pollock, through the whole of those proceedings, reflected the greatest credit upon that individual—not only upon his talents, but upon his heart and his humanity. What was his argument? Sir Frederick Pollock protested before his God and his country that he could not find authority, principle, or justice that could enable him to take the objection at any other time than the time he did, and which nine out of the fifteen Judges said ought to be taken earlier. Now, suppose this case came before the fifteen Judges at the present time, when Sir Frederick Pollock was on the bench, that would bring to it, at all events, the casting vote of one of those Judges, and then it might be seven to seven upon this very point. Were there no other authorities in favour of the view of the six Judges? Look to the decision of four Judges out of five of the Court of Queen's Bench If Frost, Williams, and Jones, were tried in the Court of Queen's Bench, instead of being tried at Newport, they must have been acquitted, for four out of five of the Judges of the Queen's Bench recorded their votes in favour of its being an illegal conviction, saying it was fatal, and that the objection was taken in time. They had also the authority of Lord Brougham in the House of Lords, who stated—

"If the majority of the Judges at the trial had decided, upon being pressed for their decision, they must needs have instantly been acquitted. It was an objection fatal to the whole proceeding — it applied to every one of the witnesses. The jury were empannelled—the plea had been pleaded—nay, more than that, again they could not have been tried. That was the first and principal ground he wished their Lordships to consider, and the other was altogether independent of the former. The counsel for the prisoner had a right to press for judgment at the trial, and it now turned out—because they knew what the Judges had done—it turned out, too, that two out of those Judges were in favour of the objection made at the trial, and of the party waiving the objection until after the arraignment and plea pleaded. It consequently followed as a matter of absolute demonstration, that if they had exercised their right of pressing the objection at the trial at Monmouth, it consequently followed, as a certainty, that the objection would have been sustained. and the trial at once put an end to. He (Lord Brougham) knew, in point of fact, that that was not an opinion taken up after the arguments in town, but it was their opinion at Monmouth, at the trial. A stronger case—but infinitely strengthened by the bargain made with the counsel—a stronger case for absolute acquittal, in the whole course of his professional experience, he confessed he had never known. He considered, looking at the circumstances of the case, that these unfortunate individuals were entitled to a total release, an extension of mercy it could not be called, because he conceived that a total release was a legal right and justice."

It was due to Lord Brougham to state, that not only by that speech, stating those sentiments in his place in Parliament, but otherwise, he did the utmost that it was possible for man to do, not only to save the lives but to regain the liberties of those men, and to carry out what he then said, namely, that an acquittal was their legal right. The conviction was confirmed by the Judges; but recollect what had occurred at that time, and the feeling that existed in the public mind. Why at that time about four millions of signatures were attached to petitions to the Queen in favour of those men. They knew very well that the execution of those men was fixed for the Thursday following the decision of the Judges, which was given on a Friday. They knew that the scaffold was erected—that the block was prepared—that the executioner went down; but then the humane voice of the British public succeeded, but it did not succeed until it was pushed on and accelerated by Lord Brougham and Sir Frederick Pollock. Let them read the papers of that day, and they would find it stated that Sir Frederick Pollock waited six times—he thought on the Friday and Saturday preceding the execution, after the decision of the Judges—upon Lord Melbourne and the Home Secretary at that time. He was returning from them in distress and dismay, having found those parties totally inexorable, and resolved that those men's lives should be sacrificed—he saw Lord Brougham in the ante-room of the House of Lords, and stated his distress, that he had been so often with the Ministers that day, and could make no impression upon them; and Lord Brougham's answer to him was, "Go the seventh time, and say that those men will be legally murdered if they persevere." The seventh visit was sufficient: they changed the sentence, and the public voice and humanity did triumph on that occasion. The sentence of execution was commuted to transportation for life. But there would always remain this doubt on the public mind, that if this were a sentence which they would not and could not execute by inflicting the utmost penalty of the law, they could not execute it legally even by transportation—transportation not making that conviction legal that would be illegal for execution—and that impression still existed. At that time petitions poured

in upon the then existing Government, and an answer was given that it was necessary to make an example of those persons; but there was a sort of hope held out, that if their future conduct entitled them to the clemency and mercy of the Crown, after a certain number of years their case should be taken into consideration. That time was now arrived. The people of this country thought that after six years of great suffering, the law—the majesty of the law—was sufficiently vindicated. Frost and his companions were for three years working in chains. In what part of the world did they find a political prisoner—for after all they were political prisoners, though of the highest class—in what part of the world,he repeated, did they find a political prisoner treated in that manner? Did they treat them so in France? Where were they so treated? But he did not now complain of that. He did not ask for their acquittal, but he asked for their release; and he must observe, that it was a most extraordinary thing that England was the only country where, on occasions of great rejoicing, they did not offer an amnesty to political prisoners. Look to France. There was, to be sure, a remission of sentences made in England at the birth of the Prince of Wales. Parties were released from different prisons, and pardons granted them; but the case of no political prisoner received a merciful consideration. Look to France, and see what occurred there within these two years; in the year 1844, upon what was considered the victory and the triumph of the French arms on the coast of Africa. It was stated in the ordinance which released those parties. In consequence of the exploits of the Prince de Joinville, between fifty and sixty republicans were released from prison at Doulens, and six Bonapartists. There was a partial amnesty, in consequence of the victory that had crowned the French arms on that occasion. It was not a general amnesty, but a partial amnesty; and amongst the parties released were several of those who—it would be in the recollection of the House—proceeded from England to Boulogne, and made almost as insane and rash an attempt at insurrection as that made by Frost and the other parties who descended from the hills in Wales. It was a partial amnesty, but he trusted would be made a general one, and that Prince Louis Bonaparte and others would be released. Several of his colleagues and companions had been released, and there was an individual to be found in the list of persons released who was concerned in the attempt to assassinate the Duke d'Aumale. He was pardoned and set free; and was there no instance in English history for such an amnesty? Was there any reason against it? Had not our arms been equally victorious, and their country equally prosperous? And was not this a time for the Government to show some degree of mercy? They were inviting France at that moment to a more liberal commercial policy, and why should they be behind France in the race of mercy? They should follow her example by releasing those persons; sufficient punishment had been inflicted upon them, the law had been sufficiently satisfied, and by now pardoning them the Government would act in accordance with the wishes of the great body of the people of this country. He knew that great prejudices and alarms existed on the subject, and he knew nothing that could more tend to create them than the letters of his right hon. Friend (Mr. Macaulay), addressed to some of his constituents of Edinburgh. His right hon. Friend stated that those individuals were great criminals. He did not wish to palliate for an instant their offence—no more did any of the petitioners. But he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh was creating an unnecessary prejudice against those individuals, and causing unnecessary alarm, in case the Government thought fit to recall them. What did the right hon. Gentleman say in one of those letters. That they have not endured sufficient punishment. He says—

> "But rely upon it, there will be insurrections enough if turbulent and designing men are apprized that the penalty of raising a civil war is henceforth to be less than the penalty of robbing a hen-roost. Thinking this, I cannot hold out any hope that I shall vote for any Address in favour of those criminals."

He would observe, with reference to a passage in that letter, that if the law did transport a man for life for robbing a hen-roost, that was a most severe law, and the sooner it was corrected the better. The right hon. Gentleman said in another place in that letter—

> "They raised a rebellion which you admit to have been unjustifiable, led thousands of ignorant labouring men into guilt and danger, fired on the Queen's troops, wounded a magistrate in the discharge of his duty, caused the deaths of several unhappy creatures."

He believed that Frost's object was to make a moral demonstration in favour of Vincent then in prison; but when ten

or twelve thousand men got together, it was hard to say what would be the result, particularly when there were some of them with arms in their hands. Unless they could see into the breasts of those men, it was impossible to say what was their intention. He must look to their acts; but what he complained of was, that those two letters should be published in connexion with the petition he had the honour of presenting to the House, and which was called at that time the national petition. It was coupling the outrages of those men with what was supposed to be the object of the petition, and he must say that his name was most unfairly introduced into that letter. The right hon. Gentleman says—

"I believe that the non-electors are as deeply interested as I am in the security of property and the maintenance of order; but I believe that a very large portion of them do not understand their own interest. That it is so I have proof under their own hands. I refer to the petition which Mr. Duncombe presented to the House of Commons in 1842. In that document some hundreds of thousands of Chartists asked for the franchise, and told us how they meant to use it. They avowed that their objects were national bankruptcy—confiscation of the soil—of canals—of railroads—of machinery, in short, the destruction of all property."

He, therefore, presenting a petition for the destruction of all property, the right hon. Gentleman continued—

"I was firmly convinced, and am firmly convinced, that such measures would produce indescribable misery to the great majority of the petitioners. I refused them the franchise as I would refuse a razor to a man who told me he wanted it in order to cut his throat."

He must say, he wished he had been near the right hon. Gentleman when he was about to take up the pen; for, if he were, he would have refused him the pen as determinedly as the right hon. Gentleman declared he would refuse the man the razor. He was not obnoxious to the charge of supporting a petition the avowed object of which was national bankruptcy, and the destruction of all property. He should be unworthy of a seat in that House if he presented such a petition. That petition emanated from about three millions of his fellow subjects; and he wished the right hon. Gentleman would point out any passage that bore such construction as that which the right hon. Gentleman had put upon it. He did not say the petition was well or ably drawn up, but he would say there was nothing in it to justify such a serious charge. One passage in that petition runs thus:—

"That your petitioners deeply deplore the existence of any kind of monopoly in this nation: and whilst they unequivocally condemn the levying of any tax upon the necessaries of life, and upon those articles principally required by the labouring classes, they are also sensible that the abolition of any one monopoly will never unshackle labour from its misery until the people possess that power under which all monopoly and oppression must cease; and your petitioners respectfully mention the existing monopolies of the suffrage, of paper money, of machinery, of land, of the public press, of religious privileges, of the means of travelling and transit, and a host of other evils too numerous to mention, all arising from class legislation, but which your hon. House has always consistently endeavoured to increase instead of diminish."

He really did not see how anybody could say that that was a petition for the destruction of life and property. There was a monopoly of suffrage. He did not know whether the hon. Member for Birmingham was there; but he could tell them that there was a monopoly of paper. There was also a monopoly of machinery; and, decidedly, of land. It was what they were fighting about every day, and that monopoly was contended for by the agricultural and landed interest of the country to the present time. There was a monopoly of religion, and also of the means of travelling and transit. Had they not been passing Bills with reference to railway travelling, and not allowing that monopoly to different companies? But let the right hon. Gentleman look to the concluding sentence of that petition:—

"And that your petitioners, desiring to promote the peace of the United Kingdom, security of property, and prosperity of commerce, seriously and earnestly press this their petition on the attention of your hon. House."

There was no proposition for the confiscation of property, or to create national bankruptcy laid down in that petition. He presumed that his right hon. Friend wrote those letters and authorized their publication; but he must say, he thought they were unfortunate letters to be written at that time, and were certainly calculated to prejudice a Motion of this sort; and if any Gentlemen were about to speak against his proposition in consequence of the impressions they might have imbibed from reading those letters, he hoped they would read the national petition before they entered into any discussion on that point. He agreed in the opinion expressed in a letter addressed to the electors of Westminster by an hon. and gallant Gentleman who had lately a seat in that House (Captain Rous). The Committee appointed for

the purpose of endeavouring to procure the liberation of Frost, Williams, and Jones, addressed letters on the subject to Captain Rous, and also to his (Mr. Duncombe's) hon. and gallant Friend the present Member for the city of Westminster. Sir De Lacy Evans stated that he would give them every assistance in his power, and give his vote in favour of their release. Captain Rous said, "nothing would give him more pleasure than to hear that Her Majesty's Government had ordered the release of Frost, Jones, and Williams; that he believed they were more likely to receive a pardon from Sir Robert Peel's Government than from the Whigs." They, therefore, had it from a Lord of the Admiralty that they were more likely to receive the liberation of those men from Her Majesty's present Government than from a Whig Government—more particularly after this letter from a right hon. Gentleman who had been Secretary at War and a Cabinet Minister under the Whigs, and might be Secretary at War and a Cabinet Minister again. The right hon. Gentleman next wrote about the militia, and in a very bellicose strain too. He thought they were more likely to receive the release of Frost, Williams, and Jones, from the present Government than from any other, particularly when he saw the Solicitor General sitting near the right hon. Baronet. The hon. and learned Gentleman knew the case well, and he had read his able speech on the occasion. Of course the counsel of a prisoner was not concluded by the language he expressed when arguing a case; but they might see his sentiments running through the whole of his address, from which they might see that those individuals were ill-used. He felt assured that the conduct of Sir Frederick Pollock was such as to entitle him to make that observation; for after Frost was condemned, after sentence was passed on him that he should be hanged, drawn, and quartered, what did Sir Frederick Pollock do? He visited him in his dungeon, and took leave of him; and let them not tell him that Sir Frederick Pollock, or any other Member of the Bar, would go into the cell of this wretched man, if he believed him to be a felon. There was a strong sentiment in favour of those men, and with regard to the case, which he took the liberty of submitting to the House; and the summing up of Sir Nicholas Tindal would justify any man in saying that it was a doubtful case. It was thought necessary that they should be tried for high treason. He would put this case. If the hon. Member for Cork were tried for high treason—and he remembered it was stated there that he might be tried for high treason—if he were tried for high treason instead of misdemeanor, and convicted, let them recollect this—he would not have had the chance he had on that occasion. His case was argued before thirteen of the Judges, and eleven to two of the Judges decided in favour of his conviction. There was no appeal from the decision of the Judges in reference to Frost, Williams, and Jones. If there had been, how did they know but that the House of Lords would have decided against the Judges, as they did in the case of O'Connell, who was tried for a misdemeanor? This only proved that it was necessary, absolutely necessary, that there should be an appeal in criminal cases. He thought, from the manner in which the right hon. Baronet had answered a question at the commencement of the Session, that it was the intention of the Government to give the right of appeal in criminal cases—at least under certain circumstances. It would be satisfactory to the country if an appeal could be permitted in the case of Frost, Williams, and Jones, from the decision of the Judges, particularly when the Judges were so divided as they were on that occasion. They had granted an amnesty to Canadians; and he should be extremely obliged if any Gentleman would show him that Frost's case was worse than the case of the Canadian rebels. There was undoubtedly a difference between them. The Canadians were engaged in a systematic and continuous warfare against the Queen's troops; but in the case of Frost there was no rebellion: there was a tumult, a dangerous tumult, and certainly lives were lost on the occasion; but there was not a systematic rebellion, such as had taken place in Canada, against the Queen's Government. He could not understand why the case of the three unhappy Englishmen should not meet with the same consideration from Her Majesty's Government as that of the Canadian rebels. He did not ask the Government to raise them, as they had the Canadian rebels, to offices of trust and emolument, the duties of which very probably they discharged with honour to themselves, and with advantage to the Canadian Government; but that they would listen to the prayer of the numerous petitions with respect to Frost, Williams, and Jones; and if they thought that the public

voice and opinion were worthy attention, that Her Majesty's Government and the right hon. Gentleman would give the subject their most serious consideration. He would only add his own earnest prayer to that of the people of this country, that this subject should meet with the attention which its importance required. The hon. Member concluded by submitting his Motion to the House.

Sir J. GRAHAM said: I should be extremely sorry if one word which fell from me on the present occasion were tinctured with the least degree of passion or acrimony, for I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Finsbury, that it is most desirable we should dispassionately and deliberately consider the proposition he has brought before us, without the slightest regard to party differences or feelings. I must say, on that ground, that I regretted some of the topics introduced by the hon. Gentleman when he weighed the probabilities of a question of this nature, immediately and exclusively connected with the administration of justice, being regarded more or less favourably by any parties who might happen at the moment to be the responsible advisers of the Crown. I readily admit that the number of petitions presented on this subject, and in favour of the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury, has been very large. I admit also that the memorials which it has been my duty to present to Her Majesty in the course of the last year were not only numerous, but signed by a very large portion of the working classes of this country. I must also add that the decision of Her Majesty's Government has been adopted after duly weighing all the circumstances of this case, with reference both to the nature of the crime, and the circumstances under which it is our duty to regard it. I do not deny to this House the competency or the right of interference on such a question; but I may say that I think interference ought at all times to be tempered with discretion, that it ought not to be lightly undertaken, and that upon the whole it is most desirable to maintain strictly the line of demarcation between the functions of the legislative and executive Government. It must always be borne in mind that the brightest and noblest prerogative enjoyed by the Sovereign is exercised under the advice of the responsible Ministers of the Crown; and I shall not shrink from my responsibility, as one of the advisers of Her Majesty in the present case. The hon. Member for Finsbury stated that the persons whose situation he has brought under the notice of the House were misguided and unfortunate. I must say, I dissent altogether from the position of the hon. Gentleman that they were unfortunate, for with reference to the crime of which they stand convicted, they were fortunate in the highest degree. The hon. Gentleman also said that the feeling in favour of these individuals is strong and very general. I admit it. But the hon. Member went on to say that that feeling was universal. To such a proposition I most unequivocally demur. Those who believe that the sentence passed on these individuals ought to be commuted have not hesitated to express so humane a feeling; but those who think the cause of justice and order requires that the punishment to which they have been sentenced should be inflicted, have abstained from the expression of that opinion, in full reliance upon the disposition of Her Majesty to exercise the prerogative of mercy consistently with principles of justice. The hon. Member for Finsbury stated that, in his opinion, the conviction of the persons to whom he has referred was not legal. He stated very accurately the point of law reserved for the opinion of the Judges, and a nicer technicality could not well have been brought under their consideration. The facts are these:—the Statute, which justly affords peculiar advantages to parties accused of treason, provides that they shall have certain privileges which are not extended to prisoners accused of other offences. Among those advantages is this—that parties accused of treason shall be furnished with a copy of the indictment, and a list of witnesses at the same time, and within a given period before the trial. The prisoners in this case were most anxious to obtain, at the earliest possible period, a copy of the indictment on which the grand jury had found a Bill against them; and the solicitor for the Crown, with an eager and commendable desire to afford them the full advantage of their privilege, furnished them with a copy of the indictment at the earliest possible period, five days before the expiration of the period within which he was required by law to do so. On the day within the limit prescribed by law he also furnished them with a list of witnesses; and the point taken was, that the delivery of the two—the copy of the indictment and the list of witnesses—was not simultaneous. That point was reserved by the learned Judges who tried the prisoners for the opinion of

their brethren. The hon. Member for Finsbury has said that I have admitted, under certain limitations, the necessity of an appeal in criminal cases; and because I have made that admission, he put a case in which an appeal was made from the opinion of the Judges to the decision of the House of Lords. I never held out the slightest expectation that I could be a party to the establishment of such an appeal in cases of felony. As the law now stands, the final appeal in criminal cases is to the opinion of the fifteen Judges; and the decision of the fifteen Judges upon the question is held to be final. Now, what was the opinion of the fifteen Judges in the case to which the hon. Gentleman referred? It is true that nine out of the fifteen held that the objection, if taken at the right time, would have been valid; but it is also true that nine out of the fifteen held, that in this case the objection was not taken at the right time. So far the hon. Member for Finsbury and myself are agreed. But what was the unanimous opinion of the whole fifteen Judges? It was, that if the objection had been taken at the right time, the sole effect would have been a postponement of the trial, and the case would have been decided at a subsequent period. I must repeat my observation that, considering the advantage which was most humanely—and, as I think, rightly—extended to them by the advisers of the Crown, and considering also that the extreme sentence of the law was not carried into execution on account of this difference of opinion among the Judges, these prisoners were most fortunate. But I next come to the point taken by the hon. Member for Finsbury, that the offence of which these prisoners were guilty was only a moral demonstration in favour of the Charter. I think the hon. Gentleman said it was only to be regarded as a moral demonstration. ["No, no!"] Well, then, I withdraw the statement.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, what he had stated was, that he believed that Frost had come down from the hills in order to make a moral demonstration in favour of Vincent, who was then in confinement in London.

Sir J. GRAHAM: I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that the purpose of Frost, in going on the night in question to Newport, was to make a moral demonstration. I must observe, in justice to the hon. Member, that he frankly admitted that those persons were convicted of a heinous offence, and one which, in his opinion, was wholly unjustifiable. This circumstance induces me to state to the House—or rather to recall to their recollection—what were the facts of the case. It is not for me to defend the opinions of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay), who is far more competent than I am to vindicate the sentiments he has recorded on the subject; but I may say, deliberately and dispassionately, after viewing the circumstances of this case, with respect to the offence itself, that I have arrived at the same conclusion as the right hon. Gentleman. I must say, that a more heinous offence has seldom been committed. Now, what were the facts? In the year 1839, there was great distress in the mining districts of this country. The price of provisions was high; the rate of wages was low; and a very general spirit of disaffection and insubordination was manifested. In the moment of that distress, amidst a population so excited and discontented, in a district where frequent meetings of the people had been held, Frost, who exercised great influence in the neighbourhood, decided, in concert with Williams and Jones, that, upon a particular evening, a descent should be made at midnight upon the town of Newport, by three different columns—one headed by Frost, the second by Williams, and the third by Jones. Their avowed purpose was to overpower the military quartered in that town; to take possession of the place; to break up the bridge over the Usk; and to stop the mail. The stopping of the mail was a preconcerted signal, by which the population of Birmingham and the northern districts were to know that Newport was in their possession, and there was then to have been a general rising for the purpose of establishing the Charter. Now, that I may not misrepresent the matter, I will call the attention of the House to what was proved on the trial of these men. The hon. Member for Finsbury has truly said, that the Crown was represented on that occasion by two of the brightest ornaments of the profession of the law—Lord Campbell, who was then the Attorney General, and whose mind was deeply and honourably imbued with sound constitutional principles, and the hon. and learned Member for Worcester (Sir T. Wilde), who, at the time to which I refer, filled the office of Solicitor General. Now, what said the Lord Chief Justice Tindal—than whom a more eminent and dispassionate Judge is

not to be found—in summing up the case on the trial of Frost and his co-accused? The Lord Chief Justice said—

"The charge against the prisoner at the bar is, that, having broken the faith and true allegiance which he owed to his lawful Sovereign, he has levied war against Her within Her realm; that is, in one word, a charge of high treason. I observe that the learned Attorney General stated the case on the part of the Crown against the prisoner to be this—that the prisoner at the bar had brought down to the town of Newport a very large multitude of persons, armed and arrayed in a warlike manner; and that the plan was, to get possession of the town of Newport, to break down the bridge, stop the mail, and that, the mail not having arrived at Birmingham for some time, it would be a signal for a general rising in Birmingham and Lancashire, and the Charter law would become the law of the land. The learned Solicitor General, who has summed up the evidence, has stated the outline of the case, which has been proved pretty nearly in the same form, omitting, with great propriety, that part of it upon which no evidence has been offered, namely, that which related to the general establishment of Charter law. The Solicitor General stated, that the plan of the prisoner was, to get together bands of armed men, with intent, by surprise and terror, or by force, to take Newport, to exercise power there, to supersede the magistracy, and thereby raise a general rebellion within the kingdom. Now, there can be no doubt whatever that if either of the propositions which have been so stated by the law officers of the Crown is made out to your satisfaction, there is full proof of the commission by the prisoner of the crime of high treason."

Now, upon that summing up, and after hearing the defence—a defence, I believe, almost unrivalled in point of talent and force, which was conducted by the hon. and learned Solicitor General, and the present Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, Sir F. Pollock—after everything that legal ingenuity, powerful eloquence, and an earnest desire to obtain the acquittal of the prisoners had been exhausted, the jury, weighing the evidence under the direction of Lord Chief Justice Tindal, and with reference to the statement of the law officers of the Crown, deliberately adopted a verdict of "Guilty." Now, I will read what fell from Lord Chief Justice Tindal in passing sentence upon these prisoners. He said—

"It has been proved, in your case, that you combined together to lead from the hills, at the dead hour of night, into the town of Newport, many thousnnds of men, armed in many instances with weapons of a dangerous description, in order that they might take possession of the town, and supersede the lawful authority of the Queen, as a preliminary step to a more general insurrection throughout the kingdom. It is owing to the interposition of Providence alone that your wicked designs wese frustrated. Your followers arrive by daylight, and, after firing upon the civil power and upon the Queen's troops, are, by the firmness of the magistrates, and the cool and determined bravery of a small body of soldiers, defeated and dispersed. What would have been the fate of the peaceful and unoffending inhabitants of that town, if success had attended your rebellious designs, it is impossible to say. The invasion of a foreign foe would, in all probability, have been less destructive to property and life. It is for the crime of high treason, committed under these circumstances, that you are now called upon yourselves to answer; and by the penalty which you are about to suffer, you hold out a warning to all your fellow subjects, that the law of your country is strong enough to repress and to punish all attempts to alter the established order of things by insurrection and armed force; and that those who are found guilty of such treasonable attempts must expiate their crime by any ignominious death."

I have already observed that, on account of a legal difficulty, which was not ruled in favour of the prisoners, but upon which there was a material difference of opinion among the Judges, the prisoners were spared that ignominious death, and their punishment was commuted to transportation for life; and we are now to consider whether that sentence should be carried into execution. I do not wish to aggravate this case; but I should betray my duty if, in weighing this matter, I did not take into consideration one important fact. I have said that Frost possessed great influence in the neighbourhood in which he resided. On that ground, he had been entrusted with Her Majesty's commission for the preservation of the peace. He was entrusted with that commission in the confident exorder, tranquillity, and peace. He abused pectation that all his influence and power would be exerted among his neighbours for the purpose of maintaining that trust; he grossly abused it: he abused it to the extent I have already stated. And, certainly, if justice is to be administered—as I hope it ever will be in this country—with mercy, but still with a due regard to the example to be afforded to a great community, I cannot overlook this circumstance of so gross an abuse of a trust so important. I must be allowed to make another observation. The night on which this movement took place was unusually dark and tempestuous. Frost did not consider the fatal and disastrous results which his conduct would produce; he had no misgivings as to the consequences of his crime; but, by an interposition of Providence, the dark and tempestuous night prevented the insurgents from arriving at Newport till daybreak. Frost headed the first column and brought it into the centre of the town, to a building in which a small portion of Her Majesty's troops had

been posted. He ordered the column to fall out in front; he pointed out the post as an object of attack, and told the men to go forward. But Frost was not found in their front: he was discovered some hours afterwards in a hiding-place in which he had taken refuge. Now, with respect to their punishment, we must consider how much of that punishment has already been inflicted. The sentence, as I have before said, was commuted to transportation for life; and what time has elapsed since the infliction of that punishment commenced? A period not exceeding five years. Why, Sir, a person transported for seven years for a minor offence would not, in the ordinary course of the administration of justice in this country, have his sentence commuted at so early a period. According to the ordinary mode of proceeding, a sentence of transportation for life, even under the most favourable circumstances, would not be commuted until the expiration of ten years. Now I must remark, that if punishment be not of a vindictive character—as in this country I hope it never will be; but if it be inflicted for the suppression of crime, and in order to afford an example to a great community, I cannot think that I should be justified in advising Her Majesty to accede to the prayer of the petitioners who have supported the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury. My sympathy, I am bound to say, is not with Frost and Williams. My sympathy is with the widows and orphans of those men whom Frost, and Williams, and Jones misled, and who lost their lives on the occasion to which I have referred. I must say that I think it is useful that those men should remain—at present at least—examples that such advice as they gave to the people generally proceeds from men bold in counsel, but timid in execution; and who, when matters come to an issue, are eager to screen themselves from the consequences of their misconduct, instead of being found in the foremost rank of those whom they have incited to crime and outrage. Their example, I think, may afford a salutary and useful lesson. I am bound to say that I cannot think, under present circumstances, it would be consistent with my duty to advise the remission of the punishment to which these parties have been sentenced. Far be it from me to say that the gate of mercy should for ever be closed against them. Far be it from me to hold any such doctrine. I say that is a question of time and circumstances. At the present time, and under present circumstances, I do not think it would be consistent with my duty to recommend Her Majesty to extend Her clemency to these unfortunate prisoners. I do not consider it advisable that any interference should take place. No man respects more than I do the feelings and wishes of so large a portion of the community as have expressed their opinions in favour of the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury; but justice is administered for the benefit of the entire community, and my belief is, that it would not be for their advantage, rightly understood, that I should accede to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. MACAULAY: I would not, Sir, say a single word on this question, if my hon. Friend had not brought forward my name in the course of his speech, and if in doing so, had not, he must permit me to say, fallen into some mistakes. There exits no such connection as my hon. Friend appears to think between the letters which he introduced to the attention of the House and his Motion. Those letters were written by me at different times and to different persons. One of them was in answer to a private letter from one of my constituents, informing me of some scrupulous feelings which he and others entertained respecting the proposed calling out of the militia; and the other was written in answer to the secretary of a committee, asking me to support the Motion of the hon. Gentleman on this matter. I had no notion that either of these letters would have been published, though they were published at the same time; and perhaps I have some reason to complain of their publication, and especially that they should have been published together. They were published without my consent or authority, and not only that, but by persons taking the same view of this question which the hon. Gentleman himself takes, by persons who conceived that the publication of these letters might possibly be acceptable at the place which I have the honour to represent, but certainly not with any view to prejudice the persons whose case is now under discussion. With regard to the first of these letters, I mean to pass over all that has been said by the hon. Gentleman respecting his Motion in 1842, for an extension of the elective franchise, as I think it would be very much out of place were I, on this occasion, to go over all the grounds that he went through on the subject. There is not one word in

that letter which, on the discussion of the petition which the hon. Gentleman presented, I did not state in the most distinct manner, giving him an opportunity of refuting it at the time; and I will add, there is not a word in that letter which I am not still prepared to abide by. I will not turn away from the question before the House, by deviating into a discussion on the principles of Chartism; but I will ask every hon. Gentleman to read for himself that national petition, and then judge whether I did, or not, take a correct view regarding it. And I beg to say, also, that though the letter which I wrote on the subject of the liberation of Frost, Williams, and Jones, was written without the least expectation that it would be ever published, there is not one word in that letter which I am not prepared to reassert and maintain. But to come to the Motion before the House. In the first place, I have a preliminary objection to the hon. Gentleman's Motion—an objection which would be decisive with me, if the grounds on which he has brought it forward were even much stronger than I think they are. I have an insurmountable objection to interfere—for this House to interfere—with this particular prerogative of the Crown. No doubt this House has a right to advise the Queen with respect to the exercise of any of the prerogatives of the Crown. There is no law which says you may advise the Queen with regard to the exercise of certain prerogatives; but there are other prerogatives of the Crown on which the House of Commons is not to advise Her Majesty. There is no such law as this. But the discretion of former Houses of Commons has imposed laws upon themselves, and our discretion ought to impose similar laws on ourselves, as to the extent to which this advice should be given. There are certain rules which usage has laid down, and which we ought not lightly to pass over. There are some prerogatives of the Crown with respect to which we ought to offer advice, and there are some prerogatives with respect to which the Ministers of the Crown would be greatly to blame if they did not ask our advice before we offered it. For instance, the right of declaring war is strictly a prerogative of the Crown, and yet I think any Minister of the Crown would be much deserving of blame if he did not bring down a message to this House, asking our advice and co-operation, and ascertaining whether the House of Commons was prepared to grant supplies for carrying on the war, before the prerogative was acted on. But there are other matters connected with the prerogative of the Crown—the command of the army, for example—on which I do not suppose that any person would allege we ought to interfere. That is a branch of the administration with which this House can have nothing to do; and I pass from it to the prerogative of the Crown involved in the question now before us—the prerogative of mercy. It is no superstition, no blind veneration for the prerogatives of Her Majesty, no desire that these prerogatives should be exercised without check, which would make me wish not to interfere in their use; but I say that those by whom Her Majesty is to be advised as to the exercise of that prerogative of mercy, and who are responsible for its results—that those who should be responsible for the peace and well-being of the community—should be able to assent to the extension of the royal prerogative of mercy in every case in which it is exercised. That they should be able to feel that the exercise of this prerogative in any instance is not dangerous or injurious to the peace and order of society, when they are answerable for the effect which it may produce, and when they are bound to see that that peace and order are preserved. Is there not an object of efficacy kept in sight, in saying that they who have in view all that the necessities of society may require, shall be the persons to tender to Her Majesty the advice under which she uses this prerogative? My hon. Friend seems to look at this prerogative in an erroneous light. He seems to think that the exercise of the prerogative of mercy is a matter of mere amusement to the Sovereign—that it is a thing to be used for the purpose of giving pleasure. That is not a right view of the prerogative of mercy. I do not imagine that the royal prerogative of mercy is a thing to be let off like fireworks in order to celebrate a festivity, and to gratify the public mind. I think that it is a distinct part of justice—that it is a very solemn and awful trust resting on these principles. The Government is bound to preserve the peace of society—to see full protection given to life and property—and it is bound to do so with the smallest infliction of suffering, even to the guilty, compatible with the attainment of that object. To consider the exercise of the prerogative of mercy as a matter of gaiety, is next to the consideration of punishment as

pure revenge. The two views go together. The hon. Gentleman, in alluding to the first, reminded me of the king in *Tom Thumb*, who, when good news arrived, ordered the celebration of a universal holiday, but who afterwards, when another messenger came in with disagreeable intelligence, gave orders to the schoolmaster to whip all the boys. I do not think that view of the prerogative of mercy is consonant to the English Constitution. In this country the exercise of the prerogative should not, as in the case of some continental governments, be allowed to depend on casual circumstances, as on the event of a lucky birth in the Royal family; and yet this appears to me to be but a fair analogy to the notion which the hon. Gentleman has advanced, The view that I take of the subject is this: I conceive that the prerogative of mercy is always likely to be best used when used in conformity with the advice of those on whom rest the responsibility of watching over the public security. There is no such burden over us. For us there would be nothing easier —according to the established usage of Parliament—than to seek to gratify the feelings of our constituents by making Motions for an extension of the Royal prerogative of mercy in favour of all sorts of persons; and if once the precedent be set, depend upon it you will have it soon followed by hon. Gentlemen anxious to give no offence to their constituents; and we shall have Motions of this sort made in the case of every enormous criminal who may be sentenced to death. Have not petitions been presented in favour of every convict, no matter how great his offence may be? And I say the circumstance is perfectly intelligible. It is the natural reaction of the human mind against that barbarous penal code which was enforced in England up to the close of the last century. It is the natural reaction against the severity of our criminal law until a recent period. We have a sort of feeling which it is impossible to account for in the mind, arising from a repugnance at the severity of the law; and the result is, that there is no case of atrocity so horrible that people — ay, thousands of people—will not be found petitioning for mercy in favour of the perpetrator of it. And, I say, that if this House give due encouragement to this feeling, the people will almost force their representatives to make Motions similar to the present in every case where a capital punishment may be awarded. We had a case a short time ago, in which the greatest exertions were made to procure the release of a most infamous hypocrite who to the last moment pretended innocence. He had poisoned an unfortunate woman, to whom he was bound by the tenderest ties; and who, whatever might have been her errors, towards him maintained the most irreproachable conduct. There was not one circumstance of palliation in his case. He had all the advantages that religion, all the advantages that station, all the advantages that education could have afforded him; yet, notwithstanding this aggravation of his guilt, we had persons of the most pure and religious feelings petitioning in his favour. Even dignitaries of the Church of England signed such petitions, praying that a woman might not be hanged. She was represented to be so good—so excellent an instructress of youth — and her services would be so valuable in a penal Colony in instructing the children there in the precepts of religion, that her life was earnestly prayed for. She had been, it was said, irreproachable through life—her only offence, forsooth, being the little one of having mixed some arsenic in her father's drink; and petitions were poured in, praying that she should not expiate her crime upon the scaffold. If the prerogative of the Crown were to be used in favour of such criminals, every one of us would soon be concerned in bringing forward cases of the same character. We should find it difficult to refuse the calls that would be made upon us to make Motions similar to the present. We should have the House occupied almost every day with such matters. I therefore think it necessary to make a stand, in the first instance, against such a system. I have no hesitation in saying, with regard to this power—the prerogative of mercy—that I would rather entrust it in the hands of the very worst Ministry that ever held office, than allow it to be exercised under the direction of the very best House of Commons. If you acquiesce in my opinion, there is no difficulty that you cannot easily get through. The plain course is open before you. If you think the law too severe, mitigate it. It belongs to legislative authority to do so. If you think the Ministry do not exercise the prerogative of mercy where they ought, then address the Crown to remove them. But while you have a Ministry from whom you do not think you would be justified in withdrawing your confidence, then you are bound to

leave them, as your ancestors did, free to advise the exercise of the Royal prerogative according to the best of their own judgment and discretion. I do not know a case in which, as a Member of the House of Commons, I should be disposed to interfere with the Ministry in advising the Crown on this matter. If I could contemplate such a case, it would be some case of most momentous necessity—some flagitious and monstrous case of oppression—something like the severity that had been exercised in the reign of King James the Second, against those who had taken up arms against him in the Monmouth rebellion—some case the mere mention of which would be enough to make the blood boil—to make the hair of one's head stand on end. But is the present a case of that description? These three persons raised 4,000 or 5,000 men armed, some with fire-arms, some with scythes, some with pitchforks, many, in fact a large proportion, with deadly weapons of various kinds; and at midnight they marched with them for the purpose of taking a town. They fired on the Queen's troops, they wounded a magistrate in the discharge of his duty. [Mr. Duncombe: He was not wounded by them.] He was wounded by the fire of the traitors who were so armed. [Mr. Duncombe: No, no.] I certainly read the trial formerly, and unless my recollection altogether deceives me, the fact was as I have stated. I believe it is the case, that two wounds were received by Sir Thomas Phillips, who behaved on the occasion with a gallantry that would have done honour to a veteran soldier, much more to a man who had been trained in the civil service. After he was wounded, he avoided mentioning the matter to the private soldiers, but called Lieutenant Gray aside, and stated the fact to him. I believe it appeared on the trial that this attack was intended to lead to a great rising of the Chartists in the middle and northern counties of England. That was part of the evidence adduced. Now when I consider the language used by Chief Justice Tindal—I allude to the passage read by the right hon. Gentleman opposite—I ask, is it too strong for such an occasion? Does it even come up to the necessary conception of the enormity of the offence? When we imagine the effect of a great civil war between classes in England—and that is what these persons projected—that is what they desired—that is what they intended—it would be worse than any war we ever read of. Remember the wealth—remember the civilization—remember the power of all those classes. They were possessed of advantages, to retain which they would have made every possible effort. A civil war commenced under these circumstances, and with such objects in view, would be a visitation more horrible than can possibly be conceived—more tremendous than this country ever saw. It would be more dreadful than the wars of the cavaliers and the roundheads in the seventeenth century. Other wars may be carried on without producing any great or irreparable destruction. Soldiers may be slaughtered on the field of battle. There may be executions after the battle. But then the evils effected are not of an overwhelming character. There is no irreparable wound offered to the civilization of the country. The land may recover after such battles even as those of Towton or of Bosworth; but do you imagine that such would be the case after a great war of classes in this country? All the power of imagination fails to paint the horrors of such a contest. It would produce a shock that would be felt to the end of the civilized world, and that our grandchildren and posterity far into the twentieth century would have cause to lament and deprecate. And yet this is what these men attempted. Are we to take this as a light case? Is what they meditated a trifle? Were the means they had recourse to of a slight kind? Were their objects small and insignificant? Was their purpose one which we should ordinarily be not likely to reject? Is all crime against society in itself so very low and trivial? the murder, and rapine, and spoliation, and every excess of brutality, so unimportant that any motives are sufficient to commit and to sanction them! Is it nothing that the design comprised all the mischief that can act upon the human mind? I speak of the ringleaders. God forbid that I should thus describe the conduct of the unhappy multitude who followed them!—though even for them no individual can have any sympathy—even for those who fell by the fire of the troops. But, remember, that in order to be merciful to the multitude, we must show, at least, ordinary severity to the ringleaders. Every man who commits a crime means to succeed in the object which he has in view. The principal ringleader in this instance hoped to succeed in raising himself from the station of a linendraper in a country town, to

be the protector of a kingdom—to be one of the rulers of the public State—to be put upon the same footing with the potentates of Europe, with boundless means of gratifying his rapacity—if that be his passion—or of gratifying any other prevailing disposition which he may have. He hoped for boundless distinction and honours. These are the sort of motives which actuate the designers of such a crime. This is the sort of distinction which those aim at in meditating a measure of this kind—who seek to establish a new form of government; and yet a Motion is now made to put an end to a punishment for such a crime, which would be scarcely thought too great for a case of misdemeanor. Is it not possible that these men may not find imitators, if it shall go forth to the world that persons guilty of high treason—men who have shed blood, who have meditated a great civil war, a civil war of the worst of all kinds, a war of class against class—are to escape with a less amount of punishment than the shop-boy who filches five shillings from the till, or than the woman who steals a piece of ribbon from the counter? What is the use of law unless its punishments bear some sort of proportion to the crime committed? The hon. Gentleman alluded to the case of Canada in the last rebellion. But were none of the Canadian rebels hanged? Is there any resemblance between that and the case the hon. Member seeks to establish? In Canada you hanged the most guilty—which was proper—and you pardoned the others. It is exactly the same case here, except that you hanged nobody. You transported the ringleaders; but how many of the 4,000 or 5,000 that they brought with them, and who were technically guilty of treason, were even tried? The hon. Gentleman argues as if in this case we had hanged a good many ringleaders, and spared the rest. I have said more than I intended. I observed the highly questionable nature of the argument used by the hon. Gentleman, and I could not allow it to pass unnoticed. I do not mean to say that under no circumstances would the Government be justified in extending the mercy of the Crown to these persons; and in voting against the Motion of the hon. Gentleman, I do not object to such an extension of the Royal mercy on a proper occasion. Were I to do that, I should imitate the conduct of the hon. Member, which I condemn. The only opinion which I express is, that Her Majesty's Ministers are not to be forced by the House to exercise the prerogative with which they are entrusted, contrary to their own judgment. It would be certainly inconvenient, and perhaps unprecedented, for the House to interfere with the prerogative of mercy.

Mr. DISRAELI: I am very glad the right hon. and learned Member has vindicated his letters. It is always, to me, at least, and I believe to the House, so agreeable to listen to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, under any circumstances, that we must have been all gratified to-night that he has found it necessary to vindicate that celebrated epistle, which produced at the same time an effect that has not been forgotten; and I wish that hon. Members in a position as eminent and distinguished as that of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, would also rise and vindicate those other letters which have influenced public opinion, and produced likewise very great effect during the last six months. If they were to do that, the present debate would, I believe, be able to show a comparison in interest with any debate that has occupied our attention for a considerable time. I trespass on the notice of the House to-night with great reluctance; but I have reason to think that the House will acknowledge the necessity of my doing so, when I state that five or six years ago I was, on this very subject, in one of the smallest minorities that ever divided the House—namely, a minority of four, on a Motion identical, I believe, with that which now attracts our attention; and I certainly have not the moral courage to refrain, in the present instance, from coming forward to express an opinion similar to that which, on that occasion, I vindicated by my vote. I think it impossible to aggravate the crime of which these individuals were convicted. It is, as was said to-night by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, in probably better language than it was ever expressed in before—a crime which includes all other crimes; and I am bound also to say that I think, and have ever thought, that the punishment to which they have been subjected is as lenient as any punishment could be under the circumstances. When the crime was so enormous—when the judgment was so merciful, you might well say that it is not the part of this House to come forward either on the present or on the previous occasion; and when you have decided in all public transactions on the mere merits of the case as placed before you, then I admit it will be very difficult to meet

this objection. On the previous occasion I was, I believe, the only Tory Member who voted in the minority. I did so because I thought it was impossible for us to decide on the matters brought before us without looking to the circumstances under which they occurred. I believe that was in the year 1839, and I could not then forget that we lived at a period of great political excitement—I could not forget that the system called agitation had obtained in this kingdom for a number of years—and by that agitation carried us to the veriest confines of sedition. Men had become Ministers—parties had been destroyed and been constructed—Administrations had risen to power formed of individuals who, within a short time, had, I believe, sat on both sides of the House. Whether they were Secretaries of State or not, I need not now inquire. I felt that this state of things had been very prevalent in the country, and that there had been also a debauched state of the public mind. When persons, who to a certain degree were ignorant, uninformed, and inexperienced, were seduced by these great examples by seeing that agitation had made some men Ministers, and in another part of the United Kingdom had raised one man to be more powerful than any Minister—when other individuals were induced by these successful examples to play a card infinitely dangerous to the fortunes of this country—I thought that we were bound, whatever catastrophe might have happened, to consider the circumstances by which they were excited, and under which they had acted. I did not think that we could decide on the conduct of these men without reference to these circumstances. I did not think we could say to them, "You have waged a war against the majesty of the Sovereign; you have excited the feelings of the people—you have appealed to the passions of the multitude—you have raised expectations which, if you are well-informed men, you must have known could not be realized—you have then attempted to enforce that which was illegal, but which, if you had succeeded, would cease to be illegal, and therefore you must be punished without mercy." I know very well the correspondence that has been held by eminent leaders in this country with organized masses of the people; and, animated by this conviction, although I thought their crime enormous, and although I thought the judgment upon them a lenient judgment, I felt it my duty, when the case was brought before the House, to record my vote in their favour. I want to know whether any circumstances have occurred since which should change my opinion and my vote. The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Macaulay), happy in all the arts of composition, and in all the artifices of eloquence, but never happier than when he illustrates his arguments, has ridiculed the distempered sympathy of the public for great criminals. He says, "Look at the maudlin and mistaken zeal, the diseased and disordered state of the public mind, which sympathizes with a murderess, and proposes to send her to one of the Colonies to teach children there. Why, it is the example of our Colonies—one at least—which interests me much at this moment, and which influences me in the course I wish to take. I go to the Colonies. I see in one of them a great insurrection. I see a great political movement there, and I find that traitors there are not only not punished, but they are rewarded. I do not want the people of England to feel—although they will never find in me one who will palliate the enormities of criminals in this country—to feel there is a difference between Colonial and native crime. I am so far an advocate of free trade that I do not wish native industry to have this monopoly, and be protected in this exception. If the Colonial system can only be maintained by making Mr. Frost a slave, and Mr. Papineau the Speaker of the House of Assembly, I think that system should be put an end to as soon as possible. Then, the right hon. and learned Gentleman, never richer in any of his reminiscences than when he appeals to history, appeals to the reigns of James II., and he tell us of an instance with which you may parallel the present case. But that case was perfectly different. It was innocuous. Here Her Majesty's troops are fired on. I might ask, in a parenthesis, were not Her Majesty's troops fired on in Canada? I should like to have a return from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War of the number of Her Majesty's troops killed and wounded during the rebellion in Canada. But when the right hon. and learned Gentleman comes to us, and appeals to the reign of James II. as the model reign for sedition and treason that should be pardoned, I ask him was not the blood of Sedgmoor as costly as that at the little town of Newport? Are we to be told we are to show no mercy in the case of this insurrection, because in the reign of James II. there was a rebellion, in which

there was suffering more multiplied? I can find in the observations of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, always interesting and charming to listen to, no valid argument against the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury. But I turn to a higher authority—of course I speak with regard to present situation. And here I must remark, that the argument of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, who tells us we are bound to support the Crown in the exercise of the prerogative, which is at present in question, because it is necessary, under all circumstances, goes to prove to us that we should on no occasion question the conduct of Her Majesty's advisers. But you must look a little to the position of the Government. If we admit for a moment this position, that the prerogative of the Crown must not be questioned because of the advice which the Crown receives from an individual, an individual who has told us that in the present case he has taken even a particular responsibility as to the point at issue, we must look whether the Government possesses entirely the confidence of this House. Although I know the Government is supported by 112 Gentlemen, who are the regenerators of this country by a change of their opinions, still, when we are called upon to support the Crown in the exercise of that prerogative by the argument that we must support the Minister who advises the Crown, we are bound to consider whether the Minister possesses the confidence of the House, and whether in a week hence we may not find it necessary to support the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown under very different circumstances and for a different end, and be equally justified in it, because another Minister may be ready to accept that responsibility. Now I come to a position taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State. The right hon. Gentleman commenced his speech by stating what was his right possition, as I humbly conceive. Whatever may be my opinions upon the main question, there can, in my mind, be no doubt that the Minister of the Crown was bound to come forward and dilate upon the enormity of the crime, which I should think no one questioned, upon the prerogative of the Crown, and the delicate nature of its exercise, which I believe no one challenges—I think, I say, nothing could be more just and more politic than the position which the right hon. Gentleman first assumed, and then dwelt upon. I know it carried the feelings of those around me, and I believe of the House. It is very difficult to answer the position of the right hon. Gentleman; and I know there was an extraordinary sensation upon these benches, to find Her Majesty's Ministers had one set of opinions, to which they were determined to adhere. But the right hon. Gentleman, though he might have carried the House, and to a certain degree the country, upon that head, pauses in his course before he sits down; and when he had put himself in a clear and intelligible and strong position, both in point of constitutional opinion—that I will say, for I cannot doubt his past sentiments of loyalty—the right hon. Baronet comes forward and says, "at least for a time." "Press me," he said, looking at those hon. Members for Finsbury who were the first to discover he was of so "squeezable" a nature—"bring forward the question again upon another occasion, bring it forward in another Session—perhaps in another Parliament—and I shall be ready to meet you in the most liberal spirit!" "At present," he said, "I disapprove of treason; at present I wish that the exercise of mercy should be delicately and discreetly used; but do not for a moment suppose that I wish to stop you in your constitutional course. Press the Crown and press the Minister; and though the crime is now enormous, and though the exercise of mercy is that prerogative for which I am peculiarly responsible," as he informed us, "though the last to meddle with it, bring forward the question again; and although under present circumstances we cannot be in a minority, still bring forward the question again, and I will hear what you have to say." Now, I say that is not the way the Government ought to have met this question. As regards those parties who come before the House, I voted for them years ago, in the hour of their adversity; and whatever may be their fortunes now, I will not desert them. I voted for them then for the same reasons and with the same sentiments that I shall vote for them now; but between the Government and those forlorn individuals and their friends there is a clear position to take. They, according to the right opinion of society, and the decision of the law, have committed a great crime. The law has awarded them a great, though a lenient punishment. The Government have only two courses to take, to use their own official language. These men are

either to be pardoned or to be punished. They are to be punished as an example to society, or they are to be pardoned as an encouragement to others to hope that though they may be criminal, there is the divine attribute of mercy in the Sovereign. But no Government is authorized to come forward and say, "These are criminals; we have punished them, and we vindicate their punishment; but bring forward your Motion again, and we do not say we will then resist your appeal." That is a concession of a most demoralizing character. What is the result? Why this, that if these men ever are pardoned, if there be a remission of their punishment, if the highest, the divinest quality of the Crown, the attribute of majesty which all adore, is brought into action in their favour, what will they, and the multitude they represent, say? Will they feel gratitude to the Crown? No! They will only recognise the timidity and the weakness of the Government. For these reasons, and for others, I shall support the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Duncombe) if he persists in dividing the House, as I supported him before; but perhaps he will be satisfied in bringing the question under the notice of the public. And trusting he has by this discussion placed it in a light which will draw public attention to it, in a way that will call for wholesome sympathy, so that the Crown may perhaps be induced, by its natural impulse and disposition, and the consciousness that it possesses the sympathy of its subjects, to view with mercy the conduct of these men, I hope the hon. Member will not press his Motion to a division; but if he presses it to a division, I shall divide with him.

SIR J. GRAHAM said, he should be exceedingly sorry to be misunderstood by the hon. Gentleman, and therefore he begged to be allowed to explain. The House would remember that he deprecated interference with regard to this prerogative of the Crown. He stated the exercise —the spontaneous exercise—of it ought, in his opinion, to be guided by time and circumstances; and he went on to say he could not be responsible at the present time for any advice to Her Majesty to remit the sentence, but at the same time he thought it right to presume there was no limit to the prerogative of mercy in the Crown.

MR. J. S. WORTLEY said the hon. Member who had last addressed the House (Mr. Disraeli), had taken the opportunity of vindicating his own unerring consistency. He had told the House he had gone out in a minority of four on this question. He (Mr. S. Wortley) doubted very much whether the House would be swayed by the same reasons which seemed to have influenced the mind of the hon. Gentleman, who had certainly referred to topics which tended to show that personal considerations had brought him to give the vote he intended to give. Neither could the House feel very greatly obliged to the hon. Member for having introduced into this debate acrimonious feelings and personal allusions. The hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Duncombe) he hoped would feel that the Motion had been treated with the greatest respect and in the best feeling, by those who differed from him; but, the hon. Gentleman had but little advanced the interests of those he represented on this occasion. If a feeling had been growing up favourable to the remission of their sentence, he (Mr. S. Wortley) could not conceive a more unfortunate interposition with that feeling than this discussion, because by reviving the extreme atrocity of the crime of which they had been convicted, the Crown was embarrassed in exercising its prerogative, and mercy was made more difficult to be extended. When the hon. Member said that public opinion was embodied in favour of the remission of the sentence on these persons, he (Mr. S. Wortley) begged to differ from the hon. Member. He believed, on the contrary, that if the prayer of such petitions were conceded, that public opinion would be shocked and outraged thereby; and if the great criminals to whom reference was made were pardoned, he could but conclude that injustice would be done to others still kept in punishment, whose offences were not of so high a nature. What dark ingredient in crime, he would ask, did not enter into the offence for which Frost and his compeers were convicted? The hon. Member talked of the sudden circumstances under which the crime was committed. Why, was it not proved on the trial that the outbreak had been concocted weeks previously? All the consideration, the ingenuity, and the influence, of the position of Frost were brought to bear in furtherance of the movement. Much ignorance and bad feeling existed, most likely, at the period, in that part of Wales where these atrocities took place; but surely the punishment of the crime should not be visited upon the colliers who joined the forces of Frost,

but on those who marshalled them and led them to the attack. The hon. Member for Finsbury also seemed to consider the offence a political crime only. If it were a political offence, then was the crime of Thistlewood a political crime only. The same motives existed in both cases. Thistlewood struck at the objects of his personal antipathy, and counselled as well as planned the intended murders. Frost was equally cognizant of his object, directed his misguided followers to attack the town of Newport and its innocent people, at whatever risk, and at the expense of bloodshed. The hon. Member also said that Frost desired himself that a moral demonstration only should be made. But that very point was left to the jury by the Lord Chief Justice. The learned Judge put it to the jury to say, if Frost had entered the town for the treasonous and rebellious purpose against the Government of the Queen, and the peace of the people. What was the answer of the jury? They convicted him of his dark and iniquitous intention. The Judge called attention to that part of the charge. He put it to the jury to say if Frost was innocent of guilty intent or not? He would refer to the report of the time, and read that portion to the House connected with that point. The Chief Justice said—

"As the jury have in each case pronounced you guilty of the crime with which you have been charged, I should be wanting in my duty if I did not declare that the verdict which they have pronounced meets with the entire concurrence of all my learned brethren and myself."

Then, again, he said—

"It has been proved in your case that you contrived to lead from the hills, at the dead of night, into the town of Newport many thousands of men, armed in many instances with dangerous weapons, in order that they might take possession of the town, and supersede the lawful authority of the Queen, as preliminary to a more general insurrection."

Again, it would he seen from the evidence, that—

"The guns were to go first, the pikes next, and then the people without arms. Frost said that he was going to take Newport, and that he would break down the bridge, and prevent the passing of the Welsh mail, the non-arrival of which was to be the signal for the attack in Birmingham, in the north of England, and to the whole nation."

Yet that was the man who was now represented as having been unintentionally led into those excesses. And when he (Mr. Wortley) spoke of a general insurrection, he might say, that he knew well what was passing in the north of England at the same time; and he would state his firm conviction to the House, that had the attack succeeded at Newport, an outbreak would also have followed in the north. But was the attack at Newport against the peace of the town unconnected with the troubles afterwards arising in the north? He doubted much if the outbreak in Yorkshire was not a part of the same movement. It was at least identical in point of time. He alluded to the troubles which took place in the neighbourhood of Sheffield. So strong were the opinions of Lord Melbourne and the noble Lord the Member for London, who were in office at the moment, upon the extreme atrocity of the crime, that it was only upon the utmost pressure they were induced to remit the punishment awarded. Now having stated these matters, was this a case, he would ask, in which to exercise the prerogative of mercy? Other circumstances connected with the case should also be made known. Mr. Maule, the solicitor for the prosecution on the part of the Government, had an application made to him by the defendants' legal adviser, for a copy of the indictment and other documents. The indictment was delivered three or four days before it should have been placed in the hands of the prisoner; but the list of witnesses was not delivered at the legal period. This inadvertence was seized by the counsel (the present Solicitor General) as of advantage to his client. The circumstance was very properly so seized, and rendered of avail, in the argument which afterwards took place on the matter. The whole question of the legality of trial was argued before the fifteen Judges, in the Exchequer Chamber. Whatever the issue of that argument, no doubt could exist that Frost and his companions had been convicted of an offence which they must, without remission, have expiated with death. God forbid that the House should for one instant stand opposed to mercy! but he could not think any ground existed for interference, and even had the demurrer in the case succeeded, the only effect would have been, that the parties charged would have again been placed on trial, perhaps to be again found guilty.

Mr. AGLIONBY regretted the speech which had been just delivered by the hon. and learned Member for Bute (Mr. Wortley), which rendered it necessary that his hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury should pursue that course which, under other circumstances he (Mr. Aglionby)

should have wished him not to have taken. What he should have liked would have been for his hon. Friend, immediately after the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, to have got up and have deprecated all further discussion. Had that been done, he was quite sure that the general feeling of the country would have been had regard to by Her Majesty's Government, in whose hands the case of Frost, Williams, and Jones might have been safely left. As it was, however, he feared that his hon. Friend must adopt a different course. He had listened with regret to the speeches both of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Shrewsbury, and of his right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh—to the former, because it had placed altogether a false construction upon the remarks of the right hon. Baronet; and to the latter because it had infused a good deal of bitterness and excitement into the debate, which were by no means called for. There was a strong feeling of sympathy towards those people, which ought to meet with attention from the Government; and he would ask what was the effect of punishment in this case? Was it the prevention of crime, or the reformation of the individuals? In either case its continuation would be unnecessary. It had been continued for near six years; and their conduct in the Colony during that time had been so exemplary that the severity of their sentence had been somewhat relaxed, whilst it had been admitted that there was no reason to fear if they at once returned to the bosom of their families, that their conduct would again cause any apprehension as to the safety of the public peace. Under these circumstances, he trusted that the right hon. Baronet would still eventually recommend the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, though he feared that the Government would be delayed in adopting that step by the course which the debate had taken.

SIR ROBERT H. INGLIS said, that his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Wortley) had called the speech of the hon. Member for Shrewsbury a speech distinguished by acrimony and party feeling. He denied that the speech exhibited any party rancour; and certainly no personal acrimony. There were two leading points to which the hon. Member had directed attention. One was, that the criminals in the case now submitted to the House had been misled by the speeches of persons high in authority. The hon. Member went no farther than this—that the light which had led astray was light from a high quarter. The other point which was maintained in the speech of his hon. Friend was, that similar conduct on the part of persons in the Colonies had not met with similar punishment. Was there any man of any party in politics who would deny this? Would any one say, that the traitors in Canada were not rewarded for their treason? Had there not been instances of persons who had been expatriated, who, like Frost, had hidden themselves in a coalhole? Were they not brought back to Canada, and placed in offices of trust? What encouragement was that to the loyal men who, under Providence, had preserved Canada? Had not a man like Sir Francis Head, who, humanly speaking, preserved that country, been, by successive Governments, neglected, while Papineau was encouraged and rewarded? His hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury did not deny the guilt of these men; but he said that others in a similar situation had been encouraged, instead of meeting with similar punishment. If this was party feeling, he shared it with the hon. Member for Shrewsbury. No one was more convinced of the guilt of these men than he was: he had never voted in favour of their pardon, nor should he do so now; and if it had not been for the closing sentences of the speeches of his right hon. Friend (Sir James Graham), and of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, he should have remained silent, or contented himself with thanking them for their speeches, particularly the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, for his luminous exposition of the constitutional view of the question. He should also have thanked his right hon. Friend, had it not been for the last portion of his speech; and he (Sir R. Inglis) confessed, that even his right hon. Friend's explanation was not satisfactory to him; nor did he think that his right hon. Friend did not mean, while he deprecated discussion in this House, to show that his own mind was not made up on this sentence, which was virtually encouraging the renewal of the discussion. ["No, no!"] That was his opinion. He did not join in the wish of his hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury, that the hon. Member for Finsbury would withdraw his Motion; but he hoped the House would reject it by a large majority, for he thought the prerogative of the Crown ought to be maintained, and never

more than in this case. Hon. Gentlemen talked of political offences, as if they were no crimes at all. Why, the offence for which these men had been transported was the concentration and essence of all crimes. If they had realized the objects they had in view, human imagination could hardly conceive a scene of greater horror and atrocity than would have been witnessed at Newport on the morning of that day when these men were apprehended. He concurred with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh in his eulogium on the merits and services of Sir Thomas Phillips, by whose gallantry, under Providence, those traitorous efforts were repulsed; for he being a civilian, and holding a civil office in the town, had marshalled the military force, and resisted the attack of the rioters. He was glad that the Government of that day had recommended him to the favour of the Crown. He had heard nothing to induce him to give any other vote than that he had formerly given, and he hoped the Motion would be met by the most determined opposition which the House could show.

Mr. WAKLEY did not know how the hon. Baronet who had just sat down, was to be satisfied. He commenced by complaining of the manner in which the hon. and learned Member for Bute had addressed himself to the remarks of the hon. Member for Shrewsbury. He (Mr. Wakley) thought, therefore, that the hon. Baronet was so overflowing with the milk of human kindness, that he was about, in the most energetic manner, to support the Motion of his hon. Colleague (Mr. Duncombe). But the hon. Baronet went on with his criticism till he came to the speech of the right hon. Baronet opposite, and of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh; and both those speeches pleased him, with the exception of one portion—and what portion was that? Why, that in which there was intimation of a merciful and humane feeling on the part of the Government. Was that the position which the Representative of the University of Oxford —of the Church of England—ought to assume in that House? He must say, that he was confounded at the spectacle which he witnessed; for he should have supposed that the hon. Baronet would have been the first man to have advocated the merciful Motion of his hon. Friend and Colleague. However, as he had been mistaken in that supposition, he should wish to carry the House back to the impression which pervaded it at the conclusion of the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department. He was sitting beside his hon. Colleague at the time; and he asked him, by all means, if possible, to prevent further discussion. His hon. Friend, in the first instance, he thought, had taken a most judicious course in appealing to the right hon. Baronet, and asking him if he could hold out any hope that mercy would be extended to Frost, Williams, and Jones? The right hon. Baronet intimated, in reply, that he was desirous that his hon. Friend should make his statement, in order, as it was stated, that a vote of that House might justify the right hon. Baronet in extending clemency to those persons. It was absurd to say that this was a question as to the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown. It was not the prerogative of the Crown which was in question. It was an appeal to the Minister for the Home Department to exercise his discretion as regarded the remission of the sentence which had been inflicted upon those individuals. It was a question which was referred to the Secretary for the Home Department; and he thought that the right hon. Gentleman had made a very fair speech with respect to it—a fair speech for a Secretary for the Home Department, and one of the tone and temper of which the House had no reason to complain. What were they to expect from the Secretary of State for the Home Department? It should be recollected that it was a position of great responsibility—a position which gave to the right hon. Gentleman who held it the duty of the conservation of the peace in this country; and every one who considered this subject, and remembered the important interests which were concerned, would admit that the Home Secretary required to exercise very great discretion in deciding as to whether or not persons who had been guilty of such grave offences as those men had should be restored to their country. His hon. Colleague, in introducing the question, did not go into the merits of the case; and when he alluded to that portion of the subject, he deprecated the offences which those men had committed, and spoke of them as offences of the highest nature; and, in addition to that, he remarked that the millions of persons who had signed petitions to that House praying for their liberation, had not, in any of the numerous petitions which they addressed to the House, used any language tending to convey any

attempt to justify the conduct for which these men had been condemned to suffer punishment. But there were, notwithstanding, millions of persons in the country of opinion who thought that if those men had been persons of higher station in society—persons possessed of more money, and who would consequently have carried their case to the other House, that the result would have been different, and they would not have been transported. He only spoke of the opinion that was entertained by a great number of persons in this country who had petitioned the House in favour of those prisoners. It was an opinion which generally prevailed, that considering the legal character of the offence with which those prisoners had been charged, the result would have been different if the prisoners had been men of greater station, and possessed of more ample pecuniary means. The House was well aware of the decision which had been arrived at in another place within the last two years upon legal grounds; and it was the opinion of great numbers in this country that if those prisoners were able to bring their case into another House, they would have been successful. But the state of the country at present was highly favourable to the remission of the punishment of those prisoners. What was the state of the country at present? There was no sedition now nor any sign of rebellion, or of discontent to any considerable extent. But if the contrary were the case, and that discontent and sedition prevailed, it would be said that those who sought for a remission of punishment proposed to encourage rebellion by the course which they recommended—namely, to call back those men to their native country. It was for the Secretary of State for the Home Department to exercise his discretion in this matter. But he (Mr. Wakley) could not avoid remarking that some of the speeches which they had heard on that night were calculated to increase his difficulties as regarded this case, and that they found in that House some of the bitterest enemies of Frost, Jones, and Williams—that some of the bitterest opponents of mercy had been found there on that occasion. They ought to recollect that the people had no representatives in that House, and that millions of these people believed that those men had been unlawfully transported. Was that House never to listen to the prayers or accede to the wishes of millions of the people; or were they always to treat the petitions of these unrepresented people with indifference and scorn? If they persisted in taking this course, they would find it one that ought not to be followed, and one that was calculated to produce danger to the Constitution. What would those persons think of finding the greatest opponents of Frost and Jones and Williams in that House? He regretted to perceive the tenor of the speeches of the right hon. Member for Oxford, the hon. Member for Bath, and the right hon. Member for Edinburgh; and he could not help expressing the hope that if every letter of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh were followed with such a postscript, that he would never write any more letters. It was a speech of great eloquence and ability, but it was accompanied with remarks which were altogether uncalled for. He was of opinion that no good could be effected by prolonging the debate. He thought that, considering the legal objections of the Judges, and the principle that an accused person had a claim to the benefit of the slightest doubt, it would be a wise and proper course to remit the sentence of those men.

MR. G. W. HOPE rose for the purpose of noticing a single point in the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford. That hon. Baronet had stated that the persons who had been found guilty of being engaged in rebellion in Canada, had been promoted and treated with honour by the Government of this country, acting through the representatives in Canada. He could assure the hon. Baronet that such was not the case; that no person who had been found guilty of being engaged in that rebellion had been employed at all. The leading person in that rebellion undoubtedly had now returned to his native country: but he had returned under no especial pardon of the Crown; but, under a flaw, if he might so call it, in the mode of proceeding; and the result had been that his conviction was found no longer available against him. But no pardon had been asked, and none had been granted to him. It was entirely in consequence of a technicality that he had been remitted from the consequences of his conviction. As respected those who had not been so prominent in the rebellion, he admitted that pardons had been issued; and the course taken by his noble Friend (Lord Stanley) who presided over the Colonial Department was this—he declined to issue any general pardon, but said he would consider each case as it presented itself, and he did so. The case of each of

the minor prisoners was considered by itself; and, with the exception of some who had misconducted themselves in the penal Colony, he had decided in their favour, having found that they had been rather misled by others than having been themselves leaders in that revolt. His hon. Friend had also said that Sir Francis Head had been neglected by successive Governments, while those who had supported Papineau had been petted and employed. If those persons had received employment in Canada, it was the natural consequence of the position they had been placed in by the result of the elections there, and not because the Government had desired either to assist or to oppose any particular set of opinions.

Lord J. MANNERS proceeded to address the House. The noble Lord commenced by observing, that, in spite of the speech just delivered by the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley), in which the hon. Member had stated that the continuance of the discussion could come to no good, and as it had been stated that the petitions of the people who had no representatives in that House were treated with scorn and indifference, he wished to interpose a very few observations before the House came to a division on the question now before it. He thought that the whole tone of the present debate must serve to convince, not only persons in the House but also out of doors, that there existed no indisposition on the part of the present House of Commons to listen calmly, fairly, and dispassionately to the cases submitted by those classes who, it was said, had no direct representatives in the House. Among other points which had arisen in this discussion, he (Lord J. Manners) wished to correct a mistake which the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley) had made, with respect to what had fallen from the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir R. Inglis). He was sure the hon. Member never meant to say that the hon. Baronet had stood up as the champion of the Church, to vindicate intolerance, and to interpose between the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. He was sure that the hon. Member would, in his calmer moments, give the hon. Baronet credit for the possession of as much humanity as that which actuated the hon. Member himself. His hon. Friend (Sir R. Inglis) might properly think, as a consistent member of the Church of England, that he was justified in promoting the laws of the land, and in vindicating its majesty; and hence the part his hon. Friend had taken. But the principal object for which he (Lord J. Manners) had risen was to express his regret at a considerable portion of the most able and eloquent speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the city of Edinburgh. He knew not whether there was anything peculiar in the construction of his mind; but he must say that he never heard historical Whiggism brought to attack modern Chartism but his judgment was shaken by the feeling of great inconsistency. In the very speech in which the right hon. Gentleman had so eloquently denounced the crime of which those men, Frost, Williams, and Jones, had been convicted, the right hon. Gentleman had attempted to find something in the shape of an excuse and sympathy for the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion.

Mr. MACAULAY: The noble Lord will excuse me. What I said was this, that if the severity of the punishment in this case had resembled the severity of the punishment by which Monmouth's rebellion had been put down, that then I thought there might be some ground for Parliament to interfere.

Lord J. MANNERS thought there was but a very little difference between them. In the case of the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion, the sentence was that the rebels should be hanged, drawn, and quartered; the sentence on Frost, Williams, and Jones was, that they should be hanged, drawn, and quartered: while the particular punishment carried out was, that the rebels in the former case were transported to the plantations; while Frost, Williams, and Jones, had been transported to the Colonies. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had not by his explanation made any material difference in respect to his case. The right hon. Gentleman had asked the House to look at the motive which had induced Frost to set himself up and to levy war against Her Majesty. What was Frost, it was asked? A linendraper, who wished to become a dictator, had been the reply. Now he could not forget that the House, by its vote on a former occasion, had determined to celebrate the name of Hampden. And who was he but a private gentleman, who also levied war against the constituted authorities of the kingdom? But it was said that the cause in which Hampden had been engaged was genuine, while that of Frost was not. That was a mere question of opinion. There were

many who thought the cause in which Frost had engaged was a legitimate cause; but still did that impression change the state of things? He (Lord John Manners) had no doubt that many hon. Members would not hesitate to vote in favour of the erection in the New Houses of Parliament of a statue to Oliver Cromwell. It was quite competent for them to do so; but what he deprecated was, these attempts to palliate rebellion in one age—these efforts to honour the conduct of a regicide in another, and then to deal harshly with those who have excited rebellion in modern times. This, he thought to be a dangerous and fatal course of policy — a course of policy to which he could never lend himself; and therefore, as he was prepared to oppose any proposition such as those to which he had alluded, so he thought he was justified in not voting for the Motion now submitted to the House by the hon. Member for Finsbury. Before he sat down, he must say that he was not disposed to look at the crime of Frost as one altogether without foundation, for he believed there had never yet been a popular insurrection which had not some great evil lying at the bottom; and he thought that if the House would attend more to the social and moral condition of the people, and less to the philosophical and political notions which at present were so much discussed, the Legislature would be laying for the future a better and more enduring foundation for those great institutions of the country which that wicked and criminal attempt went to subvert.

Sir R. PEEL: If anything could tend to strengthen my conviction of the impolicy of discussing a question of legal punishment, like the one before us, in a popular assembly, the speech of the hon. Colleague of the Gentleman who brought forward this Motion would have that effect. He says, the impression of millions of persons in this country is, that the sentence on the prisoners was illegal, and that if they had been rich enough to carry it before the House of Lords, the result would have been different—that they would have obtained a different degree of mercy from that which had been awarded, from their wanting that advantage. Surely if the question be one as to the legality of the sentence, this House is not the place in which it can be decided. Such a question ought to be decided by a different body altogether—by men of authority, eminent for their legal knowledge, capable of deciding whether the sentence was informally pronounced, or whether in any of the proceedings there was exhibited any want of technicality, or any omission of an important nature. The hon. Member asks is there to be no concession to popular feeling? Certainly not, if the popular feeling is in error. If the impression of millions as to the illegality of the sentence is erroneously entertained, the House ought to resist that impression. Is the popular impression of the legality of the sentence, to which impression the hon. Member alludes, correct or not? I say it is incorrect; and I do not found this statement on any opinion of my own, but on the highest legal authority in the country—on the opinion of the fifteen Judges to whom the subject was referred. The Judge who presided on the occasion of the trial is one of the most cautious and forbearing of men; and I can safely say that no man could be disposed to give greater advantage to a prisoner than Chief Justice Tindal. Well, what was the opinion of the Judges as to the legal question? The fifteen Judges were of opinion that delivering the list to the prisoners, however well intended for their advantage, was not good in point of law. But they also said that the objection as to the informality of the delivery was not taken at a proper time; and if it had been taken in proper time, what would have been the result? Would it have had the effect of causing a remission of the sentence, and delivering the persons from punishment? No; it would only have had the effect of causing a postponement of the trial until the informality had been corrected. What was the opinion of the Judges to whom the question was referred? That the conviction was good in point of law, and that consequently the Crown was justified in directing the sentence to be carried into effect. I am now stating correctly, I believe, the opinions of the Judges. That opinion pronounces the popular impression to which the hon. Member refers, to be erroneous; and therefore it would be subversive of the first principles of law that this House should refer to such a popular impression. But the hon. Member for Finsbury pointed to this discussion. He said—

> "See what is the result of it. Several speeches have been made, the object of which was to throw impediments in the way of the Crown showing leniency to these prisoners."

Why, that is the natural result of discussions in a popular assembly; and can there be a better proof of the unfitness of this

place for such discussions than his admission that the claims of these parties to mercy have been prejudiced by the discussion, and that he considered there would have been a better chance of the Crown exercising its prerogative if it had not taken place. It is always very difficult to exclude party considerations from discussions in a popular assembly. Political references give rise to heat and controversy, and the result is always the same. What have we, for instance, to do with Canada? There may have been some injustice; but supposing all the facts urged are correct, are they not, as was observed by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Hope), decisive proof that these matters may be left in the hands of the Crown, which showed in that case that it is not indisposed to exercise the prerogative of mercy? Sir, I cannot ask the hon. Member to withdraw his Motion, as any compromise. Nothing can be so unwise as to allow the Crown to retire from discussions of this sort with any sort of understanding, expressed or implied, as to the course hereafter to be taken. I think that ought always to be left to the unfettered discretion of the Crown. I think when my right hon. Friend says that he will not undertake to say that at no time shall mercy be shown, he is stating what is quite right; but whether the hon. Member divides or not, I think that this debate ought to close with an understanding that the Crown is under no obligation to take any other course than that which a sense of justice dictates. The interference of the House in matters of this kind inverts the relation in which it ought to stand towards the Crown. With many rights, and many duties to discharge, the Crown is the fountain of mercy and of honour. But the enforcement of the sentence of the law imposes on the Crown a painful duty. Of course in no case does the odium attach to the Sovereign, because all applications and all exercises of the prerogative are made through the Ministers; and these are prerogatives of the Crown for the exercise of which the Ministers are responsible. The same is the case with regard to the granting of honours. If the House undertakes to show lenity, and the Crown has the task of enforcing justice, I think the position of the Crown and the House of Commons will be inverted. It will be most difficult for the Crown to exercise the painful part of the prerogative, if the House of Commons, a popular assembly, arrogates to itself the right of exercising all that is indulgent. Once establish such a precedent, and how fruitful will it be in the future! Why limit it to cases of political offenders? Why limit it to cases of men of education and intellect? Why, if in the case of Frost, who was a man of property and intelligence, and had stood in a special relationship to the Crown, having been intrusted with Her Majesty's commission for the preservation of the public peace, is to be considered a case worthy of attention in a popular assembly, and in which a petition is to be presented to the Crown, to throw on it either the necessity of yielding to its application, or the odium of refusing its assent, where is the case in which the House of Commons may not act upon the precedent that will thus be shown? Will not the pressure of constituencies acting upon their representatives — influenced by merciful feelings—the natural feelings of popular meetings — cause repeated Motions like this to be made for the exercise of mercy instead of rigour? If it is to be the case that the House of Commons, in the instance of a magistrate and a man of education, should think proper to throw upon the Crown the odium of withholding the exercise of its prerogative, I can hardly conceive a case in which the House of Commons may not interfere in like manner. It may be right that the facts of this case should be fully brought before the House in a discussion of this nature; and yet the introduction of those facts at the present moment are said to throw an impediment in the way of a remission of the sentence, and to imply an intention on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers not to advise the Crown to exercise its prerogative in the present case. A magistrate makes an attack upon a peaceable town with a large body of armed men: there was to be a signal for a general insurrection—the bridge was to be broken up—the mail was to be stopped, and the stoppage of the mail was to be an indication to their party at Birmingham and other places, that the town of Newport was in the possession of the rebels, and was held against the authority of the Crown. And that is the case in which, after a period of six years' imprisonment, the House of Commons is called upon to petition the Crown for the exercise of its prerogative of mercy. I must say that I deprecate making any precedent of this kind, for I do not know where it is to stop. I am convinced that is not for the interest of the persons themselves who

are suffering the penalties of the law that such a Motion as this should be agreed to. If the hon. Member for Finsbury, who, brought forward this Motion, acting upon his own good sense, should be disposed not to provoke a division on this subject, well and good; but I hope that the hon. Member will excuse me if I do not invite him to spare us the pain of this division, by entering into any engagement whatever, either expressed or implied, with respect to a future exercise of the prerogative of mercy by the Crown. The exercise of the prerogative must be altogether left to the discretion of the Crown; and I do not think it would be wise to deprecate either a discussion or a division upon this case by holding out any expectations that it will be exercised according to the wish of the hon. Member.

MR. M. PHILIPS, as the representative of a place from which petitions, signed by a very large number of his constituency, and praying for the remission of punishment to Frost, Williams, and Jones, had emanated, thought he would not be justified if he did not rise during the present discussion, for the purpose of denying that he had any inclination to treat with scorn or contempt the petitions of his constituency while giving his vote against the Motion. He believed he was right in the opinion he had formed on that subject, and could not act contrary to it out of regard to the opinion of others, who believed themselves to be right, but whom he was convinced were in error. He denied that in opposing the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury he could be accused of acting as a personal enemy to Frost, Jones, and Williams, as had been said, and repudiated the notion that personal motives should be attributed to the Members of the House in discharge of their public duties.

MR. P. HOWARD trusted that the hon. Member for Finsbury would not go to a division, but would rest satisfied with having brought the case before the House. He was confident that the hon. Member would not advance the cause he advocated by forcing the House to an adverse decision. The working classes, who had presented petitions in reference to that case, had acted with the greatest decorum and good order; and it was but proper to receive their petitions with attention and respect, particularly as their opinions were not directly represented in that House; but believing as he did that it was not right for a popular assembly, except in extreme cases, to interfere with the prerogative of the Crown, he could not give his support to the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury.

LORD J. RUSSELL: I have no wish, Sir, to enter into the present debate; I have only risen for the purpose of pointing out to the hon. Member for Finsbury, and those Members who have taken up his views, the necessary consequences of the course they are pursuing, and the results of this discussion. My hon. Friend finds fault with the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bute (Mr. Wortley) for having, in his speech, stated circumstances which seem in his opinion, and most probably in that of the House, adverse to a favourable consideration of the case before us. But is it competent for us to come to any opinion on the case without considering the offence committed by the guilty persons? Is it possible that hon. Members could enter into a debate on this subject, and not state the circumstances which they think serve to extenuate the guilt of these persons, on the one hand, or those which, on the other, would make it inconsistent with the duty of the advisers of the Crown to extend mercy towards them? It cannot be a desirable or a profitable course to avoid discussion because it would bring into view the unfavourable circumstances of this case. It surely is not desirable that the House should appear to advise the extension of mercy which the Crown does not think proper to grant. The hon. and learned Member for Bute has, to the best of my recollection, stated the circumstances of the case most accurately and distinctly; and I feel myself bound to bear him out in the truth of his statement, that except for a difference of opinion among the Judges on a purely legal and technical point connected with the trial, the Secretary of State of that day saw no reason whatever why the punishment of death should not be inflicted on Frost and his companions. As it happened to be a great question of State, and not a mere ordinary case in criminal law, the Secretary for the Home Department thought it right to take the opinion of his Colleagues on the point; and I do not recollect that there was any difference of opinion among us—except in so far as the difference among the Judges was concerned—as to the punishment recorded against the prisoners. I think it right to state that fact, because the hon. Member for Bute has been censured for his expressions of opinion respect-

ing this subject, and because the hon. Member for Edinburgh has been also blamed on the same account. Notwithstanding the remarks of the hon. Members for Shrewsbury and Newark respecting the observation of my right hon. Friend, I must say that I consider he was justified in using those expressions. My right hon. Friend did not compare the offences of Frost and his companions with those of the insurgents in Monmouth's rebellion; but he said, that in his opinion the House should only interfere in cases of excessive punishment; and gave as an illustration of such punishment, the sentences passed on the persons concerned in that outbreak. It is well known that between 300 and 400 persons perished on that occasion by the hands of the common executioner; and that a lady advanced in age, and of great respectability, was put to death, not because she had fomented the rebellion, but because she had given harbour and refuge to a person who was guilty of treason. In such a case of extreme cruelty as that, he could conceive the House of Commons was bound to interfere; but when hon. Gentlemen say that we ought to interfere in a case of this kind, I beg of them to recollect that the laws of this country are executed with mercy; and that we are living under a Constitution to which tyranny at least is a stranger. The only question for us to consider is, if a case of this kind could be better disposed of in a popular assembly, than if it were left to the mature and well-considered judgment and opinions of the Secretary of State. I do not wish to interpose any obstacle to the consideration of this case in a merciful and favourable light by the Secretary of State; but I think that all the circumstances connected with it will be much better considered if left to his judgment, than if discussed in debate before a popular assembly, where different Members take views more or less varying and exaggerated. For that reason alone I shall give my vote against the proposition of the hon. Member for Finsbury.

Lord F. EGERTON entirely concurred in the opinion of the noble Lord. If the House was of opinion that the Government had caused to be inflicted an unjust sentence, or improperly withheld the extension of the prerogative of mercy on the part of the Crown, then the proper course would have been to have moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government in the exercise of its powers. In the case of the Dorchester labourers, the argument of that day was, that so long as the House had confidence in the Administration, the exercise of the prerogative of mercy should be left in the hands of the advisers of the Sovereign; and accordingly, when it was considered that the power of the Crown should be exercised in dispensing mercy, that mercy was shown. But he concurred in the opinion of his right hon. Friend, and also in the opinion of the noble Lord, and which he believed was the general opinion of the House, that these subjects—beyond the mere expression of humanity—were not subjects proper to be introduced into that House—no utility accompanied the discussion. Upon these grounds, without entering into the merits of these unfortunate individuals, he should give his vote against the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE felt that great responsibility was thrown upon his course on this occasion. From some of the speeches that evening, one would think that no case of the kind had ever been submitted to the House before. Why did not the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) exhibit the same indignation when the hon. and learned Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck) brought forward his Motion for a free pardon to the Canadian rebels? Not one word was said then by the right hon. Member as to the impropriety of interfering with the prerogatives of the Crown. The right hon. Baronet said, that nothing was so wrong on the part of the Government as to retire from a discussion of this sort with an understanding express or implied as to the course that might hereafter be taken with respect to the convicts. But in the case brought forward by the hon. and learned Member for Bath there was an express understanding; and the hon. and learned Member at the close of the debate said, he was perfectly content and satisfied that his clients would be released, and released they were. All he asked was, that the same weight and measure should be used for these unfortunate inhabitants of Wales as were used to the Canadians on that occasion. He had been unfairly used in this, that he had never rested the case on its merits; he had stated at the outset that he would not do so, and that neither he nor any of the petitioners attempted to justify the conduct of Frost or his colleagues; he said that they were guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor, but that they had endured punishment enough. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Mem-

ber for Bute had not done him justice in the speech he had made; and he must say a more vindictive, sanguinary, and bloodthirsty speech was never delivered in that House. The right hon. Gentleman said, they could not commit a greater outrage on public opinion than to release Frost, Williams, and Jones. Now, that he totally and entirely denied. Had the right hon. Gentleman seen the petition which he (Mr. Duncombe) had presented from Leeds, signed by 34,000 of the inhabitants of that town, among others by the vicar, Dr. Hook; by twelve members of the town-council, the chairman and vice-chairman of the board of guardians? Would it be said that the public opinion of Leeds was against the release of these men? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh had spoken of wounds received by Sir Thomas Phillips; but he could inform the right hon. Gentleman that he received no wound in that engagement: he cut his finger after the engagement was over. He believed there were Gentlemen in that House who could confirm his statement. Sir T. Phillips cut his finger while putting up a shutter in a room; but he received no gunshot or sabre wound. He did not grudge him his knighthood; but he certainly did not deserve it for any scars or wounds inflicted upon him on that occasion. In conclusion, he must say, in behalf of the petitioners, that he believed they expressed the feelings of the country on this subject; and it was therefore his determination to take the sense of the House on the question.

MR. C. O. MORGAN begged to correct that portion of the hon. Member's statement which referred to the wound of Sir Thomas Phillips. He could assure the hon. Member, that instead of a cut finger from broken glass, Sir Thomas received a gunshot wound in the hand when in the act of opening the window to call for military aid.

The House divided:—Ayes 31; Noes 196: Majority 165.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Bannerman, A.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Blake, M. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Colborne, hon. W. N. R.
Collett, J.
Collins, W.
Crawford, W. S.
Disraeli, B.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
Ellis, W.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, Sir de L.
Fielden, J.
Gisborne, T.
Hall, Sir B.
Hume, J.
James, W.
M'Carthy, A.
Pattison, J.
Pechell, Capt.
Plumridge, Capt.
Somers, J. P.
Strickland, Sir G.
Turner, E.
Williams, W.
Wyse, T.

TELLERS.

Duncombe, T. S.
Wakley, T.

List of the NOES.

Acheson, Visct.
Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Adderley, C. B.
Antrobus, E.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.
Arkwright, G.
Bailey, J. J.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Bankes, G.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Barrington, Visct.
Beckett, W.
Benbow, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Bramston, T. W.
Brisco, M.
Broadley, H.
Brooke, Lord
Brotherton, J.
Browne, Hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buller, C.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chandos, Marquess of
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Cholmondeley, hon. H.
Christie, W. D.
Christopher, R. A.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Clifton, J. T.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Coote, Sir C. H.
Copeland, Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Cripps, W.
Deedes, W.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Du Pre, C. G.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, Lord F.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Evans, W,
Finch, G.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Floyer, J.
Forman, T. S.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gill, T.
Gladstone, Capt.
Glynne, Sir S. R.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hawes, B.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcoat, J.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord M.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Hotham, Lord
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hudson, G.
Hughes, W. B.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Joscelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jones, Capt.
Kelly, Sir F.
Knight, F. W.
Lambton, H.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.

McGeachy, F. A.	Sandon, Visct.
Mackenzie, W. F.	Scott, R.
Mackinnon, W. A.	Seymer, H. K.
Mahon, Visct.	Seymour, Lord
Manners, Lord J.	Smythe, hon. G.
March, Earl of	Smollett, A.
Masterman, J.	Somerton Visc.
Maxwell, hon. J. B.	Sotheron, T. H. S.
Meynell, Capt.	Spooner, R.
Miles, W.	Stanton, W. H.
Mitcalfe, H.	Stewart, J.
Mitchell, T. A.	Strutt, E.
Molesworth, Sir W.	Taylor, J. A.
Morgan, O.	Thompson, Ald.
Morpeth, Visct.	Thornely, T.
Mundy, E. M.	Tollemache, J.
Napier, Sir C.	Tower, C.
Newdegate, C. N.	Trelawny, J. S.
O'Brien, A. S.	Trench, Sir F. W.
Packe, C. W.	Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Pakington, J. S.	Vane, Lord H.
Palmer, R.	Vivian, J. E.
Palmer, G.	Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.	Waddington, H. S.
Peel, J.	Walpole, S. H.
Philips, M.	Walsh, Sir J. B.
Polhill, F.	Wawn, J. T.
Protheroe, E.	Wellesley, Lord C.
Rashleigh, W.	White, S.
Reid, Sir J. R.	Wodehouse, E.
Reid, Col.	Wood, Col. T.
Richards, R.	Wortley, hon. J. S.
Rolleston, Col.	TELLERS.
Round, J.	Young, J.
Russell, Lord J.	Baring, H.

CONDUCT OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TO A BRITISH MERCHANT.

MR. M. PHILIPS moved for—

"Copies of all Reports or Representations, by Richard Pakenham, esquire, Her Majesty's Minister in Mexico, on which Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has founded the decision he has given on the applications of Mr. Thomas Kinder."

He said he had hoped to receive some intimation from some Member of the Government that these documents would be supplied; but not having done so, he would state the grounds on which he brought forward this Motion. He did not think the Government of this country had done justice to Mr. Kinder, or to itself, in refraining to demand that reparation which the Mexican Government was bound to make. As the representative of a large section of the mercantile interest, he was convinced that that interest would suffer materially, if British merchants were to be treated in the way Mr. Kinder had been by the Mexican Government; and this Government should refuse to interfere. Mr. Kinder had been deeply injured by the conduct of the Mexican Government; and now he was held out to the world as an individual not entitled to reparation. Perhaps there was something in the case which Government did not think proper to lay before the public; but, as far as Mr. Kinder was concerned, he was anxious for the greatest publicity. His property had been detained by the Mexican Government, without this Government interfering for its recovery; and, having laid before the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the most ample proof of his claim, he felt himself hardly dealt with in having redress withheld. He (Mr. Philips) had not the slightest feeling on the subject; but many of his constituents were interested in the matter, having made consignments to the house in which Mr. Kinder was engaged, and they were concerned in the losses he had sustained; and he thought a case had been out for the intervention of the British Government. It was solely on this ground that he rose to ask that these documents, hitherto withheld, might be produced, for the purpose of satisfying, not only Mr. Kinder, but those who had claims upon him; as also a large body of British merchants, who were looking with great interest to the decision on this question. Unless these papers were allowed to be brought forward, this Government must suffer in the estimation of all other nations, in comparison with that of America and other States, who had interfered when similar acts of aggression had taken place; while the Government of this country seemed disposed to stand still, instead of vindicating the rights and interests of its subjects.

SIR R. PEEL said, he certainly could not undertake to present the Papers to which the hon. Gentleman referred. The hon. Gentleman said that Mr. Kinder had had no reason assigned to him why Her Majesty's Government did not interfere, and insist upon the Mexican Government giving him reparation. The facts were these: Mr. Kinder had applied to the Mexican courts of justice; their decision was unfavourable to him; and, according to all the principles of international law, when the decision of a competent tribunal, appealed to by a British subject, was unfavourable to that subject, there was no ground on the part of his Government to interfere. The principle on which the Government had acted was laid down in the clearest manner by the highest authority of all the writers on international law—Vattel. He said—

"As the administration of justice necessarily requires that every definitive sentence, regularly pronounced, be esteemed just and executed as such, as soon as a cause in which foreigners find themselves interested has been decided, the Sovereign

of the defendants cannot hear their complaints. To undertake to examine the justice of a definitive sentence, is to attack the jurisdiction of him who has passed it. The Prince ought not, then, to interfere in the causes of his subjects, and to grant them his protection, excepting in the case of refusal of justice—palpable and evident injustice—a manifest violation of rules and forms, or, in short, an odious distinction made to the prejudice of his subjects or of foreigners in general."

His noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had not acted in this matter without consulting the highest legal authorities, and laying before them all the evidence; and the opinion of the Queen's Advocate was, that Mr. Kinder had no claim upon the British Government to call upon them to interfere againt the Mexican Government. Nor would it be right, because other countries were less powerful than we were, to violate the principles of international law in the way that this Motion proposed. The noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs under a former Government had come to the same decision; and his noble Friend who was at present at the head of the Foreign Department had come to the same decision, on his accession to office. Mr. Kinder had remonstrated against it. His noble Friend had not relied upon the former decision; but had again referred the whole question to the Queen's Advocate. The Queen's Advocate had again placed under his consideration all the new documents and the additional evidence, and had again said that he saw no just ground for an appeal to the Mexican Government for redress, when the courts of justice of Mexico had decided against Mr. Kinder. Those were the circumstances under which his noble Friend had declined to demand reparation; and he, therefore, could not consent to the Motion now proposed.

MR. M. GIBSON supported the Motion of his hon. Colleague. It appeared to him that the reason why this Government did not interfere in this matter was, in consequence of some report upon the subject which had been received from Mr. Pakenham, Her Majesty's Minister in Mexico. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State did not tell Mr. Kinder that he had no claim against this Government, because he had had a decision pronounced against him by the Mexican Court, but interference was refused because of Mr. Pakenham's Report. Now, all that was asked from Government was, that this Report, which had guided the Secretary of State in his decision, should be laid before Mr. Kinder. That gentleman contended with some justice, that when a respectable person had a strong *primâ faciæ* case in his favour, that he was entitled to be informed upon what grounds his claims had been refused. If the right hon. Baronet founded his right to refuse the production of the Papers upon the circumstance that Mr. Kinder had appealed to the Mexican courts, and that an adverse judgment had been pronounced against him, and, therefore, was not entitled afterwards to expect this Government to interfere, he (Mr. Gibson) could produce an answer to that argument from one of the Members of the Government. The Duke of Wellington said, "If an injustice was done to a British subject by a sentence which might be pronounced against him in a foreign court, he was entitled to call upon the Government of his own country to interpose and demand redress for the grievance inflicted upon him." In the present instance, however, the answer of the Secretary of State to Mr. Kinder, was not founded upon the sentence of any tribunal whatever, but upon the Report of a Minister. His hon. Colleague had brought forward the Motion upon public grounds; but he (Mr. Gibson) thought when individual or private interests were affected by the Report of a Minister of State, that that individual should be entitled to know the language of the Report, and the nature of the statements made. He believed it was not an uncommon thing when individuals had claims against a Government, that the opinion of the Queen's Advocate should be read to the individual. He thought Mr. Kinder was entitled to be in possession of these documents. It was possible that Mr. Pakenham might have been misled in his information; and if Mr. Kinder were permitted to see the Papers asked for, those misapprehensions might be explained. He gave his cordial support to the Motion of his hon. Colleague.

MR. R. SCOTT was also in favour of the Motion. He said, Mr. Kinder's claim had not been decided against him by the courts of Mexico; but that an Act had been introduced into the Legislature, the effect of which was to deprive him of a large portion of his property, and render him incapable of meeting his engagements. This law was passed by the most corrupt means for particular purposes, and the end being obtained, the Act was immediately repealed. There was no doubt but that the passing of this Act had inflicted a serious injury upon Mr. Kinder. He (Mr. Scott) thought

that Mr. Kinder was fully entitled to know the precise terms of the representation which had been made to the Secretary of State by Mr. Pakenham; and if any imputations were contained in that Report, Mr. Kinder would then have an opportunity of relieving his character from any imputation.

SIR R. PEEL said: I thought the hon. Member for Manchester merely intended to put the question and receive an answer, yes or no, as to whether Her Majesty's Government would lay the Papers which he wished for before the House; but now I find that he has thought it proper to take a different course. He has in effect called upon us to sit in appeal and reconsider the decisions of the Mexican courts of justice. Now, with the leave of the House, I propose shortly to state the facts of the case. I know that there is nothing more inconvenient and objectionable than reading in this House the reports of law officers of the Crown upon legal questions; but yet I think the statement given to us by the Queen's Advocate cannot fail to be of some service in the decision which we are called upon to pronounce. This, as I have already said, is a question whether or not we shall sit as a court of appeal upon the adjudications of a Mexican court of justice. All the facts of this case were brought under the consideration of the Queen's Advocate, who states in his Report that a long and expensive litigation had been entered upon and prosecuted by Mr. Kinder before one of the Mexican tribunals. The Report of the Queen's Advocate is in the following words:—

"Long and expensive litigations, involving questions of a very difficult and complex nature, have been carried on in the Mexican tribunals, whose decisions have not been favourable to the views and interests of Mr. Kinder. During the progress of the proceedings in the Mexican courts, Mr. Kinder sought more than once the interference of Mr. Pakenham, Her Majesty's Minister, in his behalf; but Mr. Pakenham considered, and, in my opinion, justly considered, that he was not at liberty to accede to the wishes and solicitations of Mr. Kinder in this respect. The despatches of Mr. Pakenham, upon which I have before reported, afford a complete justification of his conduct."

The House, then, looking at the facts of the case as set forth in the Report which I have just read, must see that this is a case in which the Representative of Her Majesty's Government could not have interfered. What, for example, would the Mexican Government have thought, if a Mexican subject had called upon Lord Aberdeen to interfere in such a case? and I must say, that I think the despatch of Mr. Pakenham affords the fullest possible justification of his conduct. With these facts before the House, I do hope that we shall not constitute ourselves a court of appeal from the Mexican courts. In what a situation would the Government be placed, if the House were to interfere in a case of this kind? and more especially I think we have a right to expect that we shall not be called upon to disclose the despatches received from Mr. Pakenham.

MR. GIBSON wished to state, that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs justified his decision on the Report, and on nothing else. [Sir R. PEEL: The Queen's Advocate sanctioned that decision.] Mr. Kinder did not ask the House for any opinion: all he sought for was the Report of Mr. Pakenham; and he denied that substantial justice was done to Kinder by the Mexican tribunals, in consequence of the system of bribery which was carried on, and which deprived him of all fair play. Those tribunals being tampered with was a case which demanded the interference of Her Majesty's Government, nor could he see why that interposition on their part could be refused.

SIR R. PEEL: Lord Aberdeen's question was, "Am I, by the laws of nations, entitled to interfere and to demand redress from the Mexican Government?" The answer of the Queen's Advocate was, that "If there were evidence of palpable injustice being done on the part of the tribunal of a foreign country, the other country had a right to demand an interference; but I can find no evidence of evident injustice, and therefore, in my opinion, you cannot interfere."

Motion withdrawn.

FRAUDULENT OBJECTIONS TO VOTERS.

MR. NEWDEGATE rose to submit his Motion.

MR. AGLIONBY protested against going into the discussion at so late an hour.

MR. NEWDEGATE felt it imperative to bring the subject before the House, and if hon. Gentlemen objected to the proceedings at that time of the night, there might be an adjournment; but if not, having already done so much to meet the wishes of all parties, he would proceed—

"To move the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into an alleged organized and extensive system of fraudulent and vexatious Ob-

jections to the votes of a great number of duly qualified Electors for the Northern Division of Warwickshire, the Northern Division of Staffordshire, and certain Divisions of other Counties."

MR. C. BULLER moved that the debate be adjourned.

SIR G. GREY said, if the discussion were proceeded with, he should move as an Amendment, that the inquiry should be of a more general character.

SIR R. PEEL recommended the hon. Member for North Warwickshire to adopt the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Grey), and make the inquiry general. He thought such an inquiry, if conducted in a proper spirit, would be of great value; for if the House came to legislate upon the subject of the registration they would find great difficulty in proceeding without some such preliminary inquiry. If the House would then permit the hon. Gentleman to have a Committee to inquire into all interferences with the right of registration, the whole question would be opened. If there were abuses they ought to be inquired into. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman was for a Select Committee to inquire into the alleged facilities afforded for vexatious and fraudulent objections to votes by the present system of registration.

MR. NEWDEGATE would adopt the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman.

Original Motion withdrawn, and the following Motion adopted :—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the alleged facilities afforded to vexatious and fraudulent objections and fraudulent claims, by the present system of Registration of County Voters for Members of Parliament."

House adjourned at a few minutes past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 11, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2° Salmon Fisheries; Roman Catholic Relief; Out-Pensioners' Payment (Greenwich and Chelsea); Out-Pensioners' Services (Chelsea and Greenwich).

Reported. Friendly Societies.

3ª and passed. Metropolitan Buildings (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Elphinstone, from John Webb Woolgar, of Lewes, against Friendly Societies Bill. —By Mr. Thomas Duncombe and Colonel Rolleston, from Masters and Workmen engaged in the Lace Trade, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Lace Factories.—By the Earl of March, from the Presbytery of Fordyce, in favour of Turnpike Roads (Scotland).

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for going into Committee on this Bill,

SIR J. GRAHAM said, that since Wednesday last he had an opportunity of performing the promise he had made to the hon. Member (Mr. Duncombe) who had introduced this measure, of consulting the law officers of the Crown and Mr. Tidd Pratt respecting its provisions. He was bound to state that he had found much greater evils to be apprehended than when he last addressed the House upon the subject; and if the hon. Gentleman would consent to the arrangement he was about to propose, it would not only expedite the settlement of the question, but materially conduce to the convenience of the House. If the hon. Gentleman would consent to go into Committee *pro formâ*, he (Sir J. Graham) was prepared to introduce the Amendments which the law officers of the Crown and Mr. Tidd Pratt had suggested. Those Amendments were certainly very extensive, and they would very much change the character of the Bill. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Duncombe) desired not only to reverse the judgment of Mr. Justice Wightman, with regard to friendly societies, but he wished that all societies should come under the operation of the Friendly Societies Act, without any limitation whatever. The Amendments which he should propose were the reverse of that. He proposed to classify and to specify all societies *ejusdem generis* with those already sanctioned by law, and declare them under the operation of the Act, and to extend the provisions of the existing Act still further, by allowing an application to be made for enrolment, on the part of societies not now included under the classes specified in the Act. On being certified by the Attorney General to be legal, though not falling within the classification enumerated in the Act, there would be an application to the Secretary of State; and the society, though not falling within the particular class, would be registered. He also proposed that Mr. Tidd Pratt should be paid by salary, the fees received being carried to public account, and that he should hold office during pleasure. He also proposed, what he felt would be of great importance—in point of fact, the practical adoption of a recommendation thrown out by Chief Justice Tindal upon the recent judgment. Mr. Tidd Pratt, by the rules of the savings banks, had the power of arbitration; but with reference to friendly societies, in cases of dispute there was no such power. He therefore proposed to give Mr. Tidd Pratt the power of arbitration, in cases of dispute in friendly so-

cieties. He also proposed to introduce another important provision, namely, that a distinct record should be kept of all the societies enrolled, with a short summary of their objects. This was an outline of all the alterations he intended to propose in the measure brought in by the hon. Gentleman, and he thought the House would agree with him that they were very important. He therefore suggested that the House should go into Committee *pro formâ*, and that the Bill be reprinted with the proposed Amendments; it might also be expedient to postpone the recommittal for at least a fortnight, in order that the measure in its amended form might be circulated through the country. Unless the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Duncombe) acceded to this proposition, he (Sir J. Graham) should be obliged to oppose the Bill as it now stood, and take the sense of the House upon it.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, he would not put the House to the trouble of supporting his Bill on the present occasion. He would accede to the proposal of the right hon. Baronet, to allow the Bill to go into Committee *pro formâ*, and that it should receive the alterations which the right hon. Baronet suggested. It was quite clear, after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that the Bill would be a totally new Bill; and in consenting that it should go into Committee *pro formâ*, of course he must consider it so entirely remodelled as to become the Bill of the Government itself. The object for which he had introduced the Bill would not in the least be effected by the alterations that the right hon. Baronet proposed. His object, and the object of those who had desired him to introduce the measure, was simply this—not only to remove all doubts which at present existed in consequence of the decision of Mr. Justice Wightman, but, in point of fact, to extend the operation of the existing law to all societies which were, in themselves, not illegal. He could not understand why a society that was not illegal should not have the benefit of enrolling their rules, as other societies had, in Mr. Tidd Pratt's office. The question really was, were benefit societies in themselves of advantage to the industrious classes? If they were of benefit to the industrious classes, the more they were encouraged the better. He wanted to bring them under the control and protection of the law. It was not to be credited that they had any illegal object when they applied for power to have their rules enrolled. He was very much afraid that the effect of the right hon. Baronet's Bill would be to control and circumscribe the beneficial operation of the existing Act; and he would say at once, that all the friendly societies now in operation would prefer the law remaining as it stood, to the alterations proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, when they saw and understood them. Of course it would be competent when those alterations were made, and the Bill was reprinted, for him (Mr. Duncombe) to suggest such further Amendments as he might think proper; though he knew they would be rejected. The Bill he had brought in was now completely mutilated; it was frittered away; and the effect of the proposed alterations would be to defeat and destroy that which the Legislature originally intended when they inserted these words in the existing Act, "or for any other purpose, not being illegal." Those words were introduced by Lord Altorp into the Act of 1834, for the purpose of embracing every society not constituted for an illegal purpose. He (Mr. Duncombe) did not care what society, not illegal, they were intended to include—whether for supporting workmen out of employment or not. The right hon. Gentleman objected to enrolling any society for supporting workmen out of employment; but the right hon. Gentleman should recollect that at this very moment there were many societies for that purpose which had their rules already enrolled. What did the Government mean? Were they going to make their Bill retrospective in its operation? Were they going to disturb those societies which had already got their rules enrolled? If they were, they would create immense confusion throughout the country. As to one alteration proposed by the right hon. Baronet, he really thought it would be better to allow the law to remain as it was than leave to the discretion of Mr. Tidd Pratt the question of what societies ought to be enrolled. With regard to the clause which provided for the payment of Mr. Tidd Pratt by a salary, instead of by fees as at present, he should say nothing. He left that to the right hon. Baronet and to Mr. Tidd Pratt. At the same time he must in justice say that, as a public officer, no person ever gave greater satisfaction to all parties than Mr. Tidd Pratt. That gentleman had a very difficult duty to perform: he was in constant communication with the industrious classes, on points of great importance and difficulty, and he believed that he

had uniformly given great satisfaction throughout all the country. But as to the Bill itself, the right hon. Baronet must consider that he (Mr. Duncombe) from henceforth washed his hands of it.

House in Committee.

SIR J. GRAHAM said, he certainly thought that if no other change whatever had been made in the Bill brought in by the hon. Member than the introduction of a clause providing for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, which would save the expense and delay of going into the Court of Chancery for that purpose, a very great advantage would have been gained. The hon. Member had stated that the great object of the measure, as he introduced it, was to enrol all societies not illegal; but the hon. Member must be aware that the extension of friendly societies not illegal was not materially checked by the Bill as proposed to be amended. The House must remember that benefit societies had one advantage. The rate of interest allowed out of the public funds to savings banks had been reduced to 3*l.* 5*s.* per cent, whilst interest at the rate of 3*l.* 16*s.* per cent was allowed to friendly societies. If this difference in the rate of interest were maintained the effect would be that savings banks, *eo nomine*, would become friendly societies in order to secure the benefit of the higher interest. Government could never permit that; but under the operation of the hon. Gentleman's Bill such would be the inevitable effect. Savings banks were not illegal; they were associations for mutual assurance, as it were; and under the authority of the Bill, if they changed their name they would take a higher rate of interest. It was utterly impossible that such a state of affairs should be allowed. The whole subject, therefore, must come under consideration; and on the part of Government he did not shrink from the responsibility of this measure. On the recommittal of the Bill he should be ready to go into further detail.

MR. WAKLEY observed that his hon. Colleague (Mr. Duncombe) justly said, the Bill which he proposed was entirely gone. It was altogether dissipated, and a monster had risen in its place, which would affright the parties who had induced his hon. Friend to appear before the House. He (Mr. Wakley) was afraid the provisions of the altered Bill would be unpopular among the friendly societies; and he thought the right hon. Gentleman should not attempt to go into Committee upon it until after Easter. The friendly societies throughout the country ought to have time afforded to them to investigate its provisions and their probable operation. At the same time he felt that if the Bill offered no other benefit than that of arbitration, rather than the remedy of the Court of Chancery, it would be desirable to pass that clause of it at least. Considering the multitude of interests involved in this measure, he entreated the right hon. Baronet not to go into Committee until after Easter.

MR. T. DUNCOMBE thought the difficulty of the right hon. Baronet, with regard to savings banks, might be easily overcome if the Bill were allowed to stand as he had introduced it, with the introduction of an exception into one of the clauses, saying that savings banks should not have the same advantage as benefit societies. He knew there was an extraordinary provision in the existing law with regard to the rate of interest, whereby savings banks received only 3*l.* 5*s.* per cent, and benefit societies 3*l.* 16*s.* All the calculations with regard to insurance were founded upon this 3*l.* 16*s.* interest, and therefore it might be difficult to alter it; but this point ought to have been considered when the interest allowed to savings banks was last under consideration. It was a most anomalous state of things; but much confusion would be occasioned by an alteration.

SIR J. GRAHAM by no means wished to disturb an arrangement which was so advantageous to friendly societies as receiving a higher rate of interest. He was most anxious that friendly societies should be encouraged, and that the advantages which they enjoyed should be maintained. All that he wished was to impose certain limits strictly in accordance with their objects, and for this purpose he had conferred with the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and Mr. Tidd Pratt, upon whose advice he acted. Any societies not enumerated or specified in the Bill might apply for enrolment.

MR. HAWES said, the hon. Member (Mr. Duncombe) wished to include in his Bill every society not illegal. The right hon. Baronet said, that was liable to some abuse; but at the same time he proposed most materially to relax the law, so as to include a much larger number of societies. It was evident from the proposition of the right hon. Baronet that the law would be relaxed. This was an advantage; considering that a material relaxation had been

afforded under proper safeguards, that scarcely one useful society could be formed that might not be permitted to participate in the usefulness of the Bill, and that the Arbitration Clause was a great public improvement; he hoped his hon. Friend (Mr. Duncombe) would see, that although he had not obtained all that was desirable, he had secured some most important ameliorations. He for one should therefore most assuredly give his cordial support to the Bill.

SIR J. GRAHAM wished to say that the clause of enumeration in the Bill, as amended, might include all the societies now in existence. Mr. Tidd Pratt went further, and said he was perfectly willing to receive, from any quarter, suggestions as to the improvement of any clause of the Bill, fairly offered in the spirit of the measure. Any such propositions he (Sir J. Graham) would be happy to consider, and if, after consulting with the law officers, he found them useful, he should be disposed to consent to their incorporation into the Bill.

Bill having gone though the Committee *pro formâ*, and additional clauses having been introduced,

The House resumed. Report brought up. Bill, as amended, to be printed.

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

MR. ESCOTT, regretting the absence of the hon. Member for Kinsale (Mr. Watson), moved the second reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. The object of this Bill was, to remove the evils still permitted to exist under the legislation by which, in darker ages, the rights of conscience had been invaded, and of which these remnants still disgraced the Statute-book of the United Kingdom. He acknowledged his deep sense of the honour conferred on him by those of his fellow subjects who had committed this work to his hands. Whatever objections might be taken to the Bill, he did not expect to hear it opposed on the ground that penalties on the free exercise of conscience in religious matters were necessary for the maintenance of the Established Church. The greatest danger, indeed, of that Church in these times was, that persons of high character and sincere piety should have room to say that the religion of the Establishment was only to be preserved by penalties for the sake of conscience, or that its edifice was still to be defaced by the legislative rubbish which this Bill would sweep away. There were at the present moment two Bills which had been introduced into the different Houses of Parliament, both proceeding on the same principle, and both having the same object—the removal of religious disabilities. One had been presented in the other House by the noble Lord on the Woolsack. Had he to take his choice between the Bill of the Lord Chancellor and that of the hon. Member for Kinsale, he confessed he should prefer the former as more comprehensive, and as effecting more of general good. But there were provisions in this Bill which were not contained in the other, and provisions in the other which were not contained in this. The two Bills ought to be considered in conjunction, so that, by amalgamating them, the most perfect measure possible, in the present state of opinion on the subject, might be passed. Where they were defective, the only course Parliament could take to secure a full toleration, and, a total amnesty for all classes of Her Majesty's subjects—would be, to return to the old common law of the land. Those penalties were no part of the Constitution, but excrescences, or rather ill plants, grafted upon it by the bigotry of unhappy times. The common law of England recognised no penalties for nonconformity; and the time, he trusted, was fast approaching when no persons in the Empire would longer be excluded by any enactment or the imposition of any oath from privileges which their fellow subjects enjoyed. But it had been said, that, though these penal statutes were highly objectionable, were repugnant to the spirit of the times, and condemned by religious persons of all denominations, they created no practical grievance, and the Roman Catholics, whom it was sought by the present Bill to relieve, were not subjected to personal inconvenience. But how did the matter really stand? The Act 31st Geo. III., which was the work of Mr. Burke, though it did not repeal former penal statutes, yet it provided relief from the infliction of certain penalties on certain conditions. Neither did the Act of 10th Geo. IV., chap. 7, commonly called "The Catholic Emancipation Act," repeal the penal statutes; having merely substituted an oath, the taking of which oath was an equivalent for the obligations or conditions imposed by former statutes. He hoped to be permitted to call the attention of the House to a few instances to prove that practical grievance still existed. He

would, in the first place, take the case of a Catholic schoolmaster; and every one would admit that the Catholic population ought to have the assistance of Catholic schoolmasters to educate their children, so as to keep pace with the advance and enlightenment of the age. Now, every Catholic schoolmaster, preparatory to commencing the work of his vocation, was at present compelled to procure a license for teaching from the archbishop of the province or the bishop of the diocese. But as such bishops belonged to the Established Church, did not that requirement involve a twofold practical grievance? The Catholic schoolmaster was to apply for a license to teach to a Protestant archbishop or bishop: that every Roman Catholic must consider a grievance; and was it not an almost equal hardship for the archbishop or bishop to be obliged to examine into the qualifications of a Catholic schoolmaster, in order to ascertain whether the teacher was, in his judgment, competent to discharge the duties of an instructor of Catholic youth; thus throwing on him the disagreeable task of refusing, if in his judgment he were incompetent? What could be more annoying to a Protestant bishop than to have to inquire into the competency of a man who differed altogether from him in religious tenets and opinions? In the course of former debates it had often been stated that all education ought to be based on religious principle. Now he (Mr. Escott) admitted that argument to its fullest extent; but surely, if all education were to be based on religious principle, as the Catholic should not be the person to inquire into the qualifications of the Protestant teacher, neither should the Protestant be the person to examine into the fitness of the Catholic teacher. The examiner should be a competent judge of that into which he is set to examine. It was, therefore, a double grievance, equally oppressive on both parties: for the sake of conscience, and for the sake of both religions, such a requirement ought to be abolished. Let them look at the case of a person neglecting to take the oath when so required. A man educated for a Catholic schoolmaster who neglected to take the oath, was subject to ecclesiastical censure in our ecclesiastical courts. He might be prosecuted before those courts, and on proof of the offence he might be convicted, and mulcted in heavy costs; and even worse than that, he might be tortured by the infinity of delay inherent in the proceedings of those courts. There was a matter connected with those courts to which he would now call their attention, as another hardship imposed by these penal laws. The office of proctor in those courts was totally unconnected with the faith of the persons so practising; yet no Roman Catholic could act as a proctor. He saw no reason why they should not be admitted to practise in those courts as well as Protestants; but, by the present state of the law, they were excluded from the office. There was another class of persons whose case he would mention to the House—a class of persons who were peculiarly subject to the grievances and hardships of those penal statutes which the Bill before the House sought to repeal. He alluded to a religious community called the "Christian Brothers;" they consisted of some thousands of individuals, scattered over the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland—they were admitted to be amongst the most able instructors of youth—they were men, as he was informed, and, as he believed, who kept to their vocations, who did not mix themselves up with the more energetic civil and religious proceedings of some Roman Catholics: keeping themselves aloof from civil discord, they devoted their lives to the pious and diligent instruction of the youths committed to their care. In Ireland, he was informed, that so highly were the qualifications of these men appreciated, that many zealous Protestants were anxious to encourage them on their estates, providing them with schoolhouses to instruct the youth, and with residences for their own personal accommodation. Numbers of those useful men were now engaged dispensing the blessings of a liberal education to tens of thousands of the rising generation, and who, in all probability, would otherwise remain destitute of instruction or moral culture. But how were those "Christian Brothers" circumstanced under the penal statutes? They were in one word legally outlawed. There was not one of those men who was not declared to be by the statute an outlaw, and subject to banishment if proceeded against before the proper authorities; and if any one of those men after having been banished from his native land returned again, he was liable to be transported for life. Would the most zealous Protestant in that House wish for the continuance of that state of things? He knew that in other countries it was not so; that in France, M. Guizot, who was himself a Pro-

testant, took the deepest interest in the success of the "Christian Brothers," and on a recent occasion had declared there was no class of persons he knew more eminently entitled to the gratitude of the people of that country. He would farther refer to those existing grievances. Under those statutes it was impossible that any wealthy or well-disposed person could give 1*s.* to any English College or University out of the United Kingdom—because the 2nd and 3rd William IV., chap. 15, called the Charters Act, especially confined such bequests to Great Britain. All persons acquainted at all with the subject of Catholic education must be aware, that, formerly, to obtain a sound instruction, it was necessary to send their youths to a foreign College or University; and such being, from necessity, the case, what was more natural than that those who had received the benefits of a liberal education abroad, should, in after years, be inclined to bequeath some money to those institutions existing in foreign lands, from which they had derived benefit and advantage. The law which prohibited that was surely neither just nor wise. It was stated respecting the oaths which it was incumbent on Catholics to take, that there was nothing in them which should excite the scruples of persons of that persuasion. But that was for them to determine. And surely if these laws were inoperative, they were useless, and ought to be repealed; if they were operative, they were unjust, and ought to be repealed. But if the House was not disposed to believe that pious persons felt a conscientious objection to take the oath, he could assure them they were very much misinformed, for he had heard within the last few days that there were in Catholic communities numbers of conscientious and honourable men, both at home and abroad, who had the strongest possible disinclination to take certain prescribed oaths. For instance, the present Archbishop of Rhodes could not sit in the Legislative Assembly of Malta, because he had an insuperable repugnance to the oath. Mr. Waterton, a Roman Catholic gentleman of the highest respectability, could not qualify as a magistrate, because of his repugnance to the oath. But these persons were left subject to all the penalties on Catholics convicted of recusancy—to all the penalties of premunire. The rev. Mr. Green, chaplain of Sir Clifford Constable, was another instance of a person who could not take the oaths prescribed by statute. Such cases showed the practical grievance which arose from the provisions of the existing law where real scruples of conscience were felt; and for the relief of those persons, for the public interest, and for its own honour, it was for the House to remove the grievance. The measure before the House was far from being a trivial matter. Thousands, from the highest to the lowest estate, were anxiously awaiting the result, solicitous to know whether they were to be restored to rights of which they believed they never should have been deprived. Nor was that class of expectants confined to Her Majesty's subjects in the United Kingdom. There were millions in other countries awaiting the decision of the House as an example of a liberal spirit, and a just toleration; and he could not help thinking, to grant the indulgence sought would only be to do justice to the faith of the great majority of Christendom; for the House could not deny that the Roman Catholic faith was the faith of the greater number of people throughout Christendom. It should also be remembered that it was due to the interests of the Established Church; for, in his opinion, the worst insult that could be offered to the Established Church was to say that it could not be maintained without galling and teazing the consciences of those who differed in opinion from its doctrines and formularies. He would, therefore, submit to Parliament that it was time to put an end to these obstructions to a more diffusive and pious charity, and to repeal laws which were repulsive to the feelings of the wisest and best of men—alien to the Constitution under which they lived—and especially cruel to those against whom they were first enacted.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, that the experience he had had in the House justified him in saying that it was much more pleasant to make concessions than to resist them. Concession, however, he had not made, and was not prepared to make, on the present occasion. Whether it were to liberate the captive, or to aid our fellow subjects at the expense of the nation, or to remove obstructions to the enjoyment of certain civil privileges—in all these cases it was far pleasanter to give than to refuse; but he trusted he might be permitted to add this also, that whilst he admitted the pleasurableness of concession, he felt the higher duty of resistance on which he had hitherto acted, and was now prepared to act. His hon. and learned Friend had said that this measure was intended to

sweep away the rubbish from the Statute-book, and to remove Acts which disgraced the dark ages of English legislation. He asked his hon. Friend to look at the Bill of which he had moved the second reading, and say whether its provisions repealed Acts which had been passed in the dark ages. The very first Act which it was proposed to repeal was an Act passed in the golden or Augustan age of English minds and literature—viz., in the time of Queen Elizabeth—a time when this country possessed men greater in every branch of literature than even the hon. Member himself, or even than any of those distinguished persons describing themselves and others as the Young England party. The next period was the great era of civil liberty, when the Habeas Corpus Act was passed. The next was the reign of William III. Was that one of the dark ages? The next period was that of George III.; but he presumed that the dark age to which the hon. Gentleman particularly referred was the year 1829. He wished most sincerely that his hon. Friend, in removing the rubbish of the Statute-book, would remove the Act of that year—the Act which he included in the same category with the other statutes. [Mr. ESCOTT: No, no.] It would not do for his hon. and learned Friend now to turn round and deny the application of his language. The clauses of that Act which this Bill proposed to repeal, were considered by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) at the time as essential to the success of the Emancipation Act, and tending to diminish the opposition to it; yet it was now, after sixteen years had elapsed, proposed to remove them. But, said the hon. and learned Member, good as that Bill was we must be prepared for something better; and he told us the Lord Chancellor had a measure more comprehensive than the present. Then those who resisted the present Bill would see more reason, from this statement, to resist the other. He grieved that it was so, but he believed it to be true that in many respects the other Bill was more comprehensive. His hon. and learned Friend had sometimes condescended to particularise. He had told us that a Roman Catholic could not practise as a proctor. Was it very extraordinary that a Roman Catholic might not practise in the Court of the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Protestant Bishop of London, having reference to the ecclesiastical concerns of that very Establishment with which he had thought the hon. and learned Member for Cork was one of the first to disclaim any desire to interfere? Be it a grievance or not a grievance, for that the Bill did not provide the shadow of a remedy. The hon. Gentleman had then told us that a Roman Catholic might not bequeath anything to a Roman Catholic College abroad, in token of his natural gratitude to the seminary by which he had been instructed. Why did not the hon. Member introduce a clause into his Bill to provide a remedy for the grievance which he said was so acute? Then, again, he said the Archbishop of Rhodes could not take his place in the Legislative Council of Malta, because he could not take the oath. He would not at present enter into the general system pursued towards Malta further than this—his doctrine was, that wheresoever the Sovereign of the country carried her flag, there she should also carry her Church. That, he repeated, was his deliberate opinion—one upon which he was ready to act, and upon which many wiser and better men than himself had acted for centuries; and till within the last few years that was the theory, unhappily not the rigid practice, of the Government of England. The Church of England was the recognised Church in every dependency of the Crown of England; and it was not till the liberalism of the last generation that any person would venture a doubt on the expediency and justice of the principle. Then, he said that our course in Malta ought to have been clear; we ought to have carried our religion as the predominant religion there, and have taken the great church of the Knights of Malta, which was a church of Rome, and made it the church of George III., and appropriated it to the service of the Church of England. Instead of that, we had been accommodating ourselves as much as possible to the language and religion of a people whom we had conquered. This was unlike the policy of the Romans, the French, or even of England herself, till within the last forty or fifty years. The case of Canada was no exception, because that was surrendered by a specific Treaty, in which provision was made for the maintenance of the Church of Rome. He would now come to the general clauses of the Bill. What was the practical effect of the Bill? He would take up the clause with reference to schoolmasters; and he would ask whether any Roman Catholic had been prevented from exercising the function or avocations of a schoolmaster because he

had omitted to obtain a license from the Protestant bishop of the diocese in which he proposed to establish his school? In point of fact, they all knew that the slightest impediment did not exist to any Roman Catholic schoolmaster pursuing his avocations on such a ground. Some member of that Church would probably rise in the course of the present debate, and he should feel obliged to that hon. Member if he would state that he knew any instance in which any Roman Catholic teacher had been prevented from exercising his avocations because he had omitted to procure a license from the Protestant bishop of the diocese in which he might happen to be placed. He was willing to admit that there were on the Statute-book many provisions which, if really carried into effect, might occasion hardship; but the hon. and learned Member had not produced, for the last century and a half, a single instance of practical grievance. With respect to one or two of these instances they had been lately repealed under terms which did not originally apply to them. It was probably familiar to the hon. and learned Gentleman, and it was not unknown to many hon. Gentlemen, that, up to a certain period, the introduction of what was called the *Agnus Dei* was prohibited under the 13th Elizabeth. Perhaps his hon. Friend was not aware of the circumstances under which the repeal of the Statute was effected. The article was included among the items of a Customs' Duties Act; and, nine-tenths of the Members present not knowing what it meant, it was passed, and the importation of it permitted. Before they made any alteration in the Constitution of the country, they were bound to show that some practical grievance existed. The present Bill repealed the Act of Supremacy, at least it repealed its penalties. It also repealed the Act which expelled the Jesuits, and which prohibited a Roman Catholic bishop from assuming the title of a Protestant See, who might assume under the law, if he pleased, the title of Archbishop of Canterbury. The present Bill also repealed the clause in the Roman Catholic Repeal Act which prohibited Roman Catholic processions. When they had prohibited Protestant processions, were they prepared to legalize Roman Catholic processions? Were they prepared to admit, in the streets of London, the procession of *Corpus Christi?* Were they prepared to admit even the ordinary procession of the Host? If they were not, did not the Bill permit that against which they contended? This Bill also repealed that clause of the Act of 1829 which prohibited any public functionary from going in his official robes to any place of worship. That clause, however, had not prevented a late chief functionary from going in his robes to the door of a Roman Catholic church; and, though he considered that was not intended to be allowed when the Act passed, yet, as the proceeding went unnoticed, he presumed it was not considered a violation of the law. When he proved, then, that there were no cases of grievance alleged as existing under the present law, which this Bill sought to remove; when he had shown that the provisions which this Bill might to repeal, were provisions which his right hon. Friend who moved the unhappy Bill of 1829 considered as necessary—was it not ungracious—there being no practical grievance which could not be obviated or evaded —to deprive the Members of the Church of England of the poor consolation that we had something which still prevented the growth of the Roman Catholic religion in this country, which prevented its extension and maintenance amongst us in the manner in which it existed three centuries ago? For these and many other reasons he felt that he should not discharge his duty unless he moved that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

VISCOUNT MORPETH: As the hon. Member for the University of Oxford has anticipated that some Catholic Member will rise during the debate, I presume he has an expectation that some of his positions will be controverted. But as a Protestant Member of this House, I rise to express my regret that any attempt has been made in this stage of the Bill to resist a laudable endeavour to get rid of the last rags and remnants of bigotry and intolerance. The hon. Baronet objects to these enactments being styled relics of the dark ages; but at all events every liberal and well-constituted mind will admit that, if not contemporary with a very dark age, they evince a very dark spirit of bigotry. The hon. Baronet states that the object of the Bill is to repeal a series of measures that have been enacted ever since the Reformation. I suppose the hon. Baronet would confine the term "dark ages" to the years preceding the Reformation; but it is hardly to be expected that we should find these enactments of disabilities against Catholics at those periods when King, Government, and country were alike Roman Catholic. But,

I have no wish to cast a slur on the times or the men with whom these measures and statutes originated, or even on those by whom they have hitherto been, for the most part, maintained. The circumstances of the times, the operation of fear, the absence of sound views, may have been motives, if not strict reasons, for their original enactment, and even their temporary retention. But, although I may not be inclined to cast a slur on the motives of those by whom they were enacted, still, on looking back upon all history and experience, I cannot resist the conviction that of all the principles which have caused evil, multiplied wrongs, and heaped sorrow upon the human race, the principle of religious bigotry has been the most prolific and pernicious. Could I be guilty of the bad taste of calling the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford a bigoted partisan, I know he would receive the charge with a gentle but reproving smile; a gentle one, because in accordance with his nature—a reproving one, because I have no right to fling about such imputations. Hardly a day passes in which I do not detect in myself something like a spirit of bigotry; and it is a tendency against which we all cannot too much be upon our guard. The hon. Baronet has said, wherever the flag of the Queen of England is reared, there her Church ought to be planted. Now, I will not follow him into an inquiry how far this principle has been pursued or attained throughout our various dependencies and Colonies; but to me it seems as much to the purpose, wherever the flag of the Queen of England is planted, to inquire what is the Church of Her subjects, rather than what is Her own. But I do not see that the speech of the hon. Baronet in any way militates against the House acceding to the second reading of the Bill; when in Committee, if any special case can be made out for such a course, then the House will do well to consent to any exceptions. But I imagine the principle of the Bill to be, that all penalties manifestly and upon the face of them useless and ineffectual, should no longer be retained upon the Statute-book merely for the purpose of keeping up an offensive superiority, and inflicting an unmerited brand. Almost the first clause of the Bill repeals the penalty attached to preaching the doctrine that any foreign prince or potentate has any authority within this realm, the penalty being forfeiture of goods and chattels, and imprisonment for a year. In thousands of pulpits every week that doctrine is put forth; and if the penalty is retained, it is a poor excuse to say it may be obviated or evaded. I contend that the retention of these enactments is a virtual connivance at falsehood. The hon. Baronet asks if any person has been visited with the penalty for exercising the vocation of a schoolmaster without a license from the bishop? But I think men are never safe under a dormant penalty which may at some time be awakened against them. Did not the hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. M. Milnes) a year ago bring forward a case in which parties were proceeded against for not going to church? There is no security that such penalties may not some day, for a malicious purpose, be put in force. Then I really think the House should hardly proceed in company with the hon. Baronet in that crusade he proposes to carry on against bells, steeples, and even articles of the toilet. The hon. Baronet has great apprehensions of seeing processions of the *Corpus Christi* and the Host in the streets of London. I think he might safely rely on the customs of the country and the manners of the times; no prohibition against such processions exists in the United States, yet it must be long since such processions have been seen in the streets of the capitals of that country. The hon. Baronet truly observes, that the Bill relaxes the prohibition against the existence of the order of the Jesuits and other religious orders in this country; I believe that the apprehensions entertained of the Jesuits exist among many enlightened men. But let us not have toleration by bits. I am not myself —and I may, perhaps, be wrong from want of sufficient information—inclined to view with any particular favour either the principles or the doctrines of the Jesuits; but still, I would, in the attempt to conquer them, meet them with the weapons wielded by such men as Pascal, and Michelet, and Libri, rather than with penal enactments and legalized oppression. And when Roman Catholic Governments or other Governments banish the Jesuits from beyond their territories, let them find on our shores as ready a reception as is given to them in the United States—as any Polish or Italian refugee meets with here. I desire our soil to be as safe and inviolate an asylum for the proscribed in religion as for the proscribed in politics. Let us shut our ports against none but criminals; let us not seek vainly to raise barriers to opin-

ion. These are briefly my sentiments, and this is why I heartily wish for the success of the Bill. We have heard a good deal about protection of late; but surely none can hope that the House will sanction or keep up a system of protection which protects nobody and no principle—which only serves to stigmatize, irritate, and annoy.

Mr. FINCH did not wish to utter a single word that would be painful to the feelings of any Roman Catholic. He did not intend to go into the details of the Bill, because he was free to confess that some of the existing enactments required to be abolished; and he thought that remark would be applicable to the case complained of respecting schoolmasters. A great deal had been said in reference to the dark ages, and they had been told that the dogma of the supremacy of his Holiness the Pope had been confined to that remote period; but he entirely denied that such was the fact; for, however hon. Gentlemen in that House might repudiate any such principle, they had good reason to believe that it existed still in the minds of many. He could tell them where, as well as the authority he had for saying so. The late Charles Butler had informed them that that doctrine was entertained by every person residing within the Vatican and its immediate precincts. The late Cardinal Bellarmine had openly avowed that the Pope retained supreme temporal, as well as spiritual, power; and he, therefore, contended, that many persons of the Roman Catholic Church had the same opinion upon the subject. The hon. Member read from the 31st of George III. the words of the oath to be administered to Roman Catholics in reference to the subject of supremacy.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The Roman Catholics were not obliged to take any oath which contained such objectionable clauses as that which required Roman Catholics to swear that they would not be privy to the commission of murder.

Mr. FINCH said, that the copy of the oath had just been put into his hands; he was, therefore, not responsible for the error. But be the oath as it may, he objected to do away with all restrictions as to the doctrine of Catholic supremacy in temporal matters. He knew that the doctrine was disclaimed in every chapel where the Roman Catholic worship was performed; but a future period might arrive—and he could conceive the possibility of its arrival—when this doctrine of the temporal supremacy of the Pope might seriously interfere with the prerogative of the Protestant Crown; and he held that where there existed a sect which held principles contrary to the spirit of the Protestant Constitution of this country, that was not a case which came within the category of those things which were matters of conscience. Then, with respect to the religious orders; he thought that the laws restraining those monastic institutions were very salutary, especially as regarded women. Young persons were very often seduced into taking religious vows at an age when they were incapable of explaining what were their real feelings, and at a time when they were without any experience of the world. Instances must occur where these vows imposed most tyrannical fetters upon the youthful mind, from which they would be happy to be released. He considered religious vows to be contrary to reason, and to the spirit of a free Constitution. He thought it would be a very good enactment that all religious communities should be liable to be visited at certain periods by some authority or commission appointed by the Crown, and that they should have the power to examine the individuals, separately, belonging to those communities, to ascertain whether it was their wish to continue their vows or not. Supposing there were 10,000 religious persons belonging to these communities, and there was only one instance of a person being retained against his or her will—that instance would justify a system of examination by which the tyranny over the conscience of that individual should be suppressed. In making these remarks, he by no means contemplated the suppression of all religious orders. That would be absolutely impossible. The noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire (Lord Morpeth) had said, that he wished to meet the Jesuits by argument and reasoning—and he instanced the writings of Pascal as the kind of works which he would prefer to use against them—rather than by penal enactments. But what effect would such works have? Were not Jesuits employed to write against Pascal, and afterwards were not those works repudiated when it served the purpose? The idea, therefore, of excluding Jesuits and the other religious orders from this country was, he believed, impracticable. But there was some check capable of being imposed upon them; and on this subject he would prefer using, to any words of his

own, the emphatic language of the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, when introducing the Catholic Relief Bill in 1829, who said that "vows of celibacy, or of any religious community, had nothing to do with the institutions and laws of this country—the spirit of which was directly opposed to persons binding themselves by secret vows and oaths." [When was it said?] It was said in 1829, by the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill. He understood the meaning of that interrogatory. The right hon. Gentleman having since made a gyration, and left all his former opinions behind, it was thought no longer permissible to refer to *Hansard*; but these were constitutional principles, and not measures of mere policy. It was true that even in Roman Catholic countries the Jesuits had been suppressed. In Spain a great part of the religious orders been put down, and yet Spain was a very strict Roman Catholic country. It was a country where they objected to the circulation of the Bible, and where religious toleration was not permitted. If, therefore, in that country it was found necessary that religious orders should be put down, it did not seem to him inconsistent that in a Protestant country the Government should retain a power over those religious orders. There were many societies now rising up under various names: there was the order of the "Sisters of Mercy," and the "Brothers of Mercy." Tracts were also being distributed at the private dwellings of the people, advocating the Roman Catholic doctrines. But with all these things Government did not interfere. No prosecutions were even thought of. But although this spirit of toleration might be wise and proper in the present day, yet circumstances might arise within a few years when it would be desirable that there should exist a power on the part of the Government to check these monastic orders, especially if they should be perverted from their legitimate purpose, and be changed into political institutions. Then with respect to religious rites and ceremonies. It was true, anything like public religious processions could hardly be expected to be attempted in this country. Yet there was no knowing how far religious zeal might go. There had been men who had already assumed somewhat of the splendour resembling the religious processions in Catholic countries. He, however, believed that the good sense of the Roman Catholics would refrain from exhibitions which to them were of a holy character, when there was the risk of any such exhibition being treated by the general mass of the people with an absence of that veneration with which they themselves regarded it. The exhibition of the host, sacred as it might be regarded by Roman Catholics, might, by persons of bad taste, be treated with insult. He did not, therefore, apprehend that anything of this description would occur. Then with respect to the Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops assuming the titles of Protestant bishops and archbishops, he thought that to repeal the law as it now stood in respect to this point was most injudicious, for nothing could be more offensive to the Protestant hierarchy than that a Roman Catholic should take to himself, for instance, the Protestant title of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or that of the Bishop of London. These things had nothing to do with liberty of conscience, nor with the free exercise of religious opinion. He, therefore, thought the clause in the Bill which repealed that portion of the existing law ought to be struck out, because it was needlessly offensive. Admitting that some of the provisions of the Bill were good, still he objected to the spirit of it. He perceived that at the present day there prevailed, among a large section of the Protestant community, and even among the clergy of the Established Church, a strong desire to promote everything that was favourable to the advancement of the Roman Catholic polity. Seeing this, and seeing also the spirit in which this measure had been introduced, and observing that its object was to make an impression on the public mind more and more favourable towards the Roman Catholic religion—he for one should feel it his duty to give his most strenuous opposition to the second reading of the Bill.

SIR J. GRAHAM said: I will detain the House but a very short time in assigning the reasons which induce me to give to the proposed Bill my most decided support. I differ entirely from the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. I support the second reading of this Bill because I am favourable to the spirit of it, because I believe that it is conceived in the spirit of toleration. I think the title of the Bill claims our support. The title declares it to be "for the repeal of Enactments imposing pains and penalties on Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in consequence of their religion." Now, if there

be such pains and penalties, I for one am anxious carefully to investigate our Statute-book, and to see whether they cannot, without danger to the community, be repealed. The hon. Member for the University of Oxford has called the Act of 1829 an unhappy Act. I, on the contrary, regard it as one of the brightest pages in the Statute-book of this country—as having been too long delayed, but as a consummation in which I am proud to have taken a humble part. And I conceive this Bill to be in conformity with that Act. It is quite true that in the other House of Parliament, on the responsibility of Government, a Bill, the provisions of which are nearly identical with this, has been introduced. My hon. and learned Friend who moved the second reading of this Bill has rightly stated that, in some respects, the measure I speak of goes further than that now under discussion. This Bill is limited to the giving relief to Roman Catholics; the Bill in the other House, and which I hope will soon come down here for consideration, does much more, inasmuch as it proposes to provide relief for all Dissenters. I do not wish to follow the hon. Member for the University of Oxford in all the topics which he has introduced. He has said that the great misfortune of the religion of George III. was, that it was not carried universally to the full extent of all our dominions and dependencies. Now, I entertain the profoundest respect and veneration for the religion of George III.; but I must say that the policy, with reference to his Roman Catholic subjects, which George III. pertinaciously maintained, was, in my opinion, a most unhappy policy. It went very nearly to deprive the British Crown of some of the most valuable portions of the British Empire. The religion I respect, but the policy, speaking sincerely, I must condemn. The hon. Member, while resisting a Bill of this nature, has made an important admission in saying that there are in existence many statutes which might occasion inconvenience and, in some cases, suffering to some of the persons professing the Roman Catholic religion, but they are not acted on. Why, if there be such statutes, I say it is our bounden duty at once to hunt them out, and, without delay, remove the disgrace. And then what is the state of the law with reference to schoolmasters who are Roman Catholics in this country? The hon. Member for the University of Oxford admits that there is a Statute—a Statute now sought to be repealed—which prohibits, absolutely, in any part of this country—that is, in England, and in this advanced and enlightened age—and which renders illegal, the teaching of children by a Roman Catholic without a license from a Protestant bishop. The measure now before the House proposes to repeal that Statute; and yet the hon. Member for the University of Oxford positively objects to the second reading. I am most anxious that the principle of this Bill should be affirmed; but I am not prepared, on the part of the Crown, to pledge myself by assenting to the second reading to all the provisions of the Bill. On a former occasion, last year, I declared that in assenting to a second reading I reserved to myself the perfect right of discussing in Committee the policy and the various clauses of such a Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford said, some time ago, with reference to the Act of Supremacy, that the Bill of the Government sought to repeal that Act; and I believe that, with respect to this point, the provisions of the Bill under discussion are identical with those in the Bill introduced in the other House. But my hon. Friend has qualified his expression; he does not now say that the clauses of of the Bill repeal—he asserts only that they modify the Act of Supremacy. That is a correct description. I for one am not prepared to be a party to the repeal of the Oath of Supremacy, and that oath is not repealed by this Act. It is not contemplated by the Bill in the other House; but, limited to the extent to which that Bill goes, I think the partial repeal of the Act of Supremacy advisable and defensible. Considering the vast number of Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in the United Kingdom, I do not think it should be any longer a matter of penalty or of permission by sufferance to affirm what they sincerely believe—the Pope's spiritual and ecclesiastical authority. But that is not now a matter for discussion: it is sufficient to say, that to the limited repeal of the Supremacy Act, as sought in this Bill, I do not object. I again say that so far from regarding the great settlement made in the year 1829 as a settlement to be regretted, I view it as one of the happiest, most politic, and wisest measures adopted in our time. To that settlement I am still disposed to adhere. Some clauses at the end of this Bill are intended to repeal an important portion of that Act; but I think it unwise at the present time to disturb that settlement. I certainly cannot assent to those particular clauses; but, with this reserva-

tion, I give my most unhesitating and cordial support to the second reading of this Bill.

MR. WYSE would for his own part have rather left the introduction of such a measure as the present to the good sense and sound policy of the Protestant members of the House, than that any alteration in the existing law should have been proposed in consequence of any unworthy complaint on the part of the Roman Catholics themselves. He could not help thinking that for the sake of the honour and character of the Protestant members themselves, they should remove from the Statute-book the remnant of that disgraceful code which had already been condemned by the general opinion of Europe. He would appeal to the hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Inglis), putting his conscience and his opinions out of view, whether, having surrendered so much of toleration to the irresistible demands of justice, it was worth while to retain these miserable old fetters hanging upon our arms, serving only to remind us of the wrongs of the past, and doing no good, but rather preventing the cordial co-operation of all classes to advance the general improvement of the age. The hon. Baronet had somewhat mistaken the stage of the debate. The House was not now in Committee on the Bill. It was not a question as to this or that clause that they were now discussing. The real matter under discussion was a question of public policy; namely, whether it were wise that any barrier should exist between one portion of Her Majesty's subjects and another, and thereby preventing a union of interests and of feeling arising out of the common rights and common enjoyments of the whole community. If one single grievance enumerated in this Bill existed, he thought the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis) was bound by his own admission to remove it; at all events, not to oppose the second reading of this measure. For the hon. Baronet had stated that there were several cases of practical suffering on the part of the Roman Catholics; and he mentioned, as an instance, the case of Roman Catholic schoolmasters. But the hon. Baronet paused in his admission, and called upon the Roman Catholic Members in that House to point out instances of injustice having actually occurred. But he would submit to the hon. Baronet that the question was not whether any grievance had really occurred, but whether any such grievance might occur. In fact, the question limited itself to this: if these enactments were of no use, why retain them? If they were of use, and could be applied, then were they not grievances which ought to be removed? From this dilemma the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis) could not escape. But the Roman Catholics had at length the authority of the Representative of the University of Oxford for a course of proceeding which, during the debates on the Catholic Relief Bill, in 1829, was made a matter of frequent and grave charge against the Roman Catholics themselves: for the hon. Baronet had said, that although he wished to retain these penal laws on the Statute-book, yet it was quite practicable for the Catholics to evade them. Thus the hon. Baronet was inculcating the very doctrine which was imputed to the Catholics as a matter of charge. It was said, during the debates he (Mr. Wyse) had referred to, that, make what laws the Legislature might, the ingenuity of the Catholics would be able to evade them under the guidance of their religious instructors; and that it was impossible to bind the consciences of Roman Catholics by enactments of a Protestant Parliament. But now the hon. Baronet held it to be wise to retain on the Statute-book enactments useless in themselves, because it was a very easy matter to evade them. This showed that in the estimation of the hon. Baronet the majesty of the law was a mere shadow and a delusion. Looking through the provisions of this Bill, it occurred to him that they might be very properly extended. He did not wish to confine the measure to Roman Catholics alone. His sincere desire was to extend it to every class and sect of Christians. The hon. Baronet seemed to entertain a peculiar veneration for Queen Elizabeth, whose reign he had characterized in the highest terms of praise. He (Mr. Wyse) would not deny that from her reign and from her statesmen many advantages had been derived to this country; but he could not be blind to the defects of her policy, or to the great errors of her statesmen. From their policy germinated in succeeding reigns that system of legislation which in its consummation produced what is called "the perfection of cruelty and impolicy—the penal code against the Roman Catholics of these realms." To show what absurd enactments passed in that reign, the Act of Uniformity required that the celebration of divine service should be in the Latin tongue; although the book of Common

Prayer was at that very time printed in English. This was in 1559. He (Mr. Wyse) presumed that such was the veneration of the hon. Baronet for everything done by Queen Elizabeth and her statesmen, that he would wish to retain this enactment, and require that every Protestant clergyman should perform divine service in the Latin language. The fact was that the whole of the Statute-book was filled with the most bigoted and persecuting enactments against the Roman Catholics; and the statesmen of the present day ought to rejoice at opportunities being given to them from time to time to remove what must be considered by all enlightened Christians bigotry and religious prejudice in the very worst sense of the words. With regard to what had been said by the hon. Member for Rutlandshire (Mr. Finch), he would beg to remark that it was desirable the hon. Member should be more adequately informed upon the subject before he ventured to express an opinion as to the sentiments of the Roman Catholics in respect to the power of the Pope. There was no such thing in the present day as the exercise of temporal power by the Pope, except in the States of Italy, of which he was the acknowledged temporal Sovereign. There did exist in the middle ages a temporal power on the part of the Pope beyond his own dominions; and those who read with a proper feeling the history of the middle ages—not confining their views to the reigns of an Elizabeth or of a William, but looking at the circumstances existing in Europe in those ages — would find that even that temporal power assumed by the Pope had its advantages, and that it was the source whence great general good to the European States flowed. But it was far from his wish to deny the principle of confining the temporal power of the Pope to his own territorial dominions. On the contrary, he joined in deprecating the extension of that power beyond the Papal States. Now, with respect to the monastic orders some observations had fallen from the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Finch), which somewhat surprised him. The hon. Gentleman had suggested as a means for suppressing the order of Jesuits, and of restricting other religious orders in this country that a sort of commission — a commission of lunacy possibly — should be appointed to inquire into any disorders that might take place in those communities, and that these commissioners should have the power of emancipating any young females from the hardships and oppressions under which they might be be placed in those societies. But did not the hon. Gentleman know that all those institutions afforded abundant opportunities to every person who entered them to consider well what they were about to do? If the objection of the hon. Gentleman was to the age of the individuals who entered those religious societies, why did he not propose to appoint a commission to inquire into the ages of persons who entered into the marriage contract — which was a bond as strong and irreversible as any vow connected with these religious orders? He did not think there was any power, or any statesman, who could devise a means by which to prevent the extension of these religious orders. The whole matter must be left to the good sense, observation, and feeling of the country. Any enactment of Parliament to impede these things must be futile in its operation. With reference to the assumption of titles by the Roman Catholic bishops, he might just observe that, in England, no Roman Catholic bishop took his title from any place within the kingdom; nor did he believe, that, were the statute prohibiting the assumption of such titles to be repealed to-morrow, would his holiness the Pope, in the exercise of his discretion, permit Roman Catholic bishops to take such titles. They had not done so since the period of the Reformation. There was a provision in the Catholic Relief Bill of 1829, forbidding Roman Catholic bishops assuming the titles of any Protestant bishop. When the Charitable Bequests Bill was under discussion, he contended for the policy of recognising the character and dignity of the archbishops and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland; and the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel), after consideration, acceded to the wishes expressed by hon. Members on this (the Opposition) side of the House. The alteration had since taken place; and among the documents which had been laid on the Table he found the most Rev. Dr. Murray entitled his Grace, and the Rev. Dr. Croly was designated as Lord Bishop. There had been no assumption of any title by a Catholic archbishop which was borne by a Protestant archbishop. There was a Catholic archbishop of Tuam, but there was no Protestant archbishop of that title existing. But it was not a question of titles that the House had to discuss. It was whether the miserable dregs of a cruel and, he had

hoped, an obsolete code, should be kept up in order to fester in the minds of a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects. The question was, whether this remnant of intolerance was necessary to uphold a great Protestant Establishment? Really he should blush, were he a Member of the Church of England, at having it supposed that that Church did not depend for its maintenance upon the purity of its doctrines and the soundness of its faith, but upon those barbarous enactments which it was the object of this Bill to put an end to. He had confidence that the good sense of the House would second the feeling which had been expressed by Her Majesty's Government on this subject, and that the Bill now before them would meet with an almost unanimous reception. He could wish that every remnant of religious intolerance should be abrogated. He did not claim any special provision for Roman Catholics, though it had been their lot to be marked out for every sort of penalty and disgrace.

MR. COLQUHOUN was anxious to explain the grounds upon which he should support the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford. He had not the slightest objection to those parts of the measure which repealed enactments that were characterized by bigotry, or that partook of the spirit of persecution. He did not agree with his hon. Friend that those enactments should remain on the Statute-book, in order that they might be evaded; which imposed penalties that were not practically enforced, because they were both unjust and impolitic. But he entertained some very strong objections to the Bill; nor did he think, because it might contain some wise provisions, that that was a sufficient reason, while entertaining those objections, that he should support its second reading. He thought the paramount part of the Bill—its purport and its design—was contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, and to that wise policy which ought to prevail, more especially at this time, in the legislative councils of the country. He would not go back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, distinguished as it was. That reign could require no defence, for any man who valued his rights, and was a lover of liberty—any man who knew and read Spencer, or Shakspeare—any man who had studied Bacon, or the works of Coke, must feel that the reign of Elizabeth stood not in need of any defence. But his objection to this measure rested upon what he considered to be the paramount part of it—namely, that it modified the Act of Supremacy. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department, asked whether it was wise or just to prevent persons from affirming that which they in their consciences believed—namely, that the Pope of Rome did hold spiritual jurisdiction in this country? But there was a more serious question than that involved in the present measure. For he found on the very face of the Bill a repeal of the Act of Supremacy, which contained these words:—

"It is enacted, that if any person or persons dwelling or inhabiting within this your realm, or in any other your Highness's realms or dominions, of what estate, dignity, or degree soever he or they be, after the end of thirty days next after the determination of this Session of this present Parliament, shall, by writing, printing, teaching, preaching, express words, deed, or act, advisedly, maliciously, and directly affirm, hold, stand with, set forth, maintain, or defend, the authority, pre-eminence, power or jurisdiction, spiritual or ecclesiastical, of any foreign prince, prelate, person, state or potentate whatsoever, heretofore claimed, used, or usurped within this realm, or any dominion or country being within or under the power, dominion, or allegiance of your Highness, or shall advisedly, maliciously, and directly put in use or execute anything for the extolling, advancement, setting forth, maintenance, or defence of any such pretended or usurped jurisdiction, power, pre-eminence, and authority, or any part thereof, that then every such person," &c.

What he conceived to be the manifest spirit of that law was this—that it was the principle of the Constitution that there should be in this country one sole constituted authority. That constituted authority rested in the two Houses of Parliament and in the Crown. But it required also that the Parliament should not, and must not, set forth by any act of its own any thing that should tend to subvert, undermine, or weaken that great authority which existed in the Crown and Parliament of this country. But he found that it was the avowed opinion of most respectable parties, that the power of the Church of Rome, the ecclesiastical power, should rule supreme over all ecclesiastical matters. They conceived that it was a doctrine asserted by their ablest writers, and it was with them every day's practice. Would the House assent to the proposition that a vote at an election was an ecclesiastical matter? Would hon. Gentlemen tell him that when he gave his vote at an election, he was not exercising a political act, for which he ought to be responsible to the State, by whose authority he exercised

that vote, but that his responsibility was to the Church of Rome? Such was the doctrine of that church; not in letter, but in act. It told him that he was not to exercise that act unless he did it at the behest of the Church of Rome. ["No, no!"] He begged hon. Gentlemen not verbally to contradict but to disprove his statement. There was ample evidence taken before the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Devonport, to prove that because an oath was taken at an election, that was considered by the Church of Rome a religious matter, and was therefore within the cognizance of the ecclesiastical authorities of that Church. [Mr. O'Connell: The authorities of the Church of Rome don't say it.] He looked not to words but to facts. He was dealing with the question as a politician, and was looking to the political safety of the country. He had nothing to do with words of denial, but with acts. He asked not what a man denied or affirmed, but what he did. It was his duty not to wage a war against the professions of men, but against the things which they constantly practised—practices which he deemed too formidable and dangerous to be passed by, and which he was prepared to meet and put down by all the authority of Parliament. He did not ask what the books said, or what the Roman code said. He would say, as M. Thiers said in the Legislature of France last year—when he declared that he did not look to professed opinions, but to the practices of the day. He trusted that the noble Lord opposite (Lord Morpeth) would allow him (Mr. Colquhoun) to quote the authority of M. Thiers, because he was allowed to be the most liberal and able statesman of France. [Mr. O'Connell: No!] Yes! but the hon. and learned man did not like that sort of liberalism. He did not like the liberalism which went to guard the rights and liberties of the subject against ecclesiastical power. But so long as he (Mr. Colquhoun) should possess a seat in that House, he should be prepared to grapple with the grasping power of ecclesiastical domination. He should always contend for the rights of conscience, free judgment, and for those great Protestant rights which were asserted at the Reformation, and which, it was his belief, the ecclesiastical authorities of Rome now sought to overthrow. Looking practically at this matter, as well as politically, M. Thiers had said that he had found a body of Jesuits in his country, and others, who were fond of advocating the doctrine that ecclesiastical power ought to be supreme over the civil power, and that the civil power ought to take its commands from the ecclesiastical; and that eminent statesman called upon the Minister during the last year to take steps to confront those projects, and to remove the parties from the soil of France. Perhaps he might not agree with the policy of M. Thiers, it not being, in his judgment, the most likely means of effecting his object, because, though the Jesuits might be removed in name, yet he very much doubted whether they would be removed in fact. That was not the recommendation which he would venture to offer to the House, nor was it the course upon which he thought their policy should be based; but he did say that for men to assert the doctrine that the ecclesiastical power should overrule the civil power was so dangerous that it ought to be confronted by that House, He had no wish to maintain the religious opinions of a great establishment, such as existed in this country, by any intolerant law. He entirely disclaimed such law, as being subversive of that Protestant principle on which the Church rested. He must repudiate it when it was asserted. It was not the doctrine of the Church of England, which was a Church of the highest possible tolerance—a Church which maintained Protestant principles within its admirable discipline—a Church which, while it recognised the order of an establishment, equally recognised the freedom of human conscience and of human judgment. But he found that it was admitted on all sides that they were advancing to a period—a very important and critical period in the history of Europe—a period in which they were engaged in a great struggle between ecclesiastical authority and civil power. His hon. Friend the Member for Rutlandshire had alluded to that struggle as existing within our own Church. He would not deny that it was a danger of a very serious character, and when it should become so serious "politically" as to require the interposition of the Legislature, he, for one, should not shrink at the proper time and in a proper manner to encounter that danger. The hon. Gentleman then adverted to the construction put upon the oath of supremacy prescribed by the Bill of 1829, by the Roman Catholic bishops; and he stated that both the ecclesiastics of that Church and a large body of respectable Roman Catholic laymen entertained insuperable objections to the tak-

ing of that oath. It was upon this that he founded his opposition to the present measure, knowing there was a party in the Church of Rome who held that the authority of that Church was so supreme, that they could not take an oath of civil allegiance to the Sovereign of this country. He would not assist in giving countenance to any such doctrine. It was a principle fatal to the constitutional liberties of England—liberties settled and confirmed at a period to which the hon. Member for Waterford looked back with disdain, but which he regarded as establishing the constitutional principles of this country, and to which he looked with pride.

MR. O'CONNELL said, he could not help feeling some surprise when he heard the hon. Member opposite defend the oath of supremacy, although the oath had practically been repealed as regarded all persons who wished to avail themselves of that provision which, concerning that oath, had given relief to the Catholics. He likewise felt considerable surprise when he heard the hon. Member who last addressed the House, saying that he had resolved to oppose the present Bill. The general impression certainly was, that such opposition could hardly be considered consistent with the language held by the hon. Gentleman on former occasions. Perhaps the reports of his speeches were not correct; but he believed that the hon. Gentleman had been a supporter of the Free Church of Scotland. As the hon. Member did not contradict that statement, he concluded that there was no mistake in the matter. Now, it was well known that the Free Church asserted ecclesiastical supremacy in all matters ecclesiastical; and he could not avoid noticing the fact that a Gentleman who supported that principle should, nevertheless, he found voting against the present measure.

MR. COLQUHOUN rose amidst cries of "Order." He said, he thought that he had some right to complain; while he sat silent an erroneous construction was put upon his silence, and when he attempted to speak he was assailed with a cry of "Order." He felt that he should be out of order if he interrupted the hon. and learned Member for Cork; but now that his silence was misconstrued, he begged to disclaim such sentiments as had been imputed to him. He had no connection with the Free Church of Scotland.

MR. O'CONNELL resumed: He expected that the hon. Member would have risen to correct the statement he had made if it were erroneous. He wished to be corrected; and now, finding that the hon. Gentleman could not be charged with inconsistency, he should take the liberty of saying that if he had supported the Free Church of Scotland, he should in doing so have been co-operating with some of the most eminent of his countrymen. The Free Church of Scotland was supported by a large proportion of the most distinguished men in Scotland, and by a great number of the clergy. It was a fact indisputable, that the great mass of the people of Scotland had declared in favour of ecclesiastical supremacy. The Act which asserted civil supremacy in matters ecclesiastical, never had been introduced into Scotland; and, as far as he could judge, not only did the Free Church, but also did the Established Church of Scotland resist the interference of the civil power in ecclesiastical affairs. In one-third, therefore, of Her Majesty's dominions, all parties rejected that constitutional principle for which the hon. Gentleman so strenuously contended. His (Mr. O'Connell's) opinion on the subject was this, that in ecclesiastical matters the ecclesiastical authorities were supreme, that the civil power should enjoy perfect supremacy in civil affairs. In a word, he supported a complete severance of the Church from the State. In thus shortly stating his views of a subject respecting which he could not remain wholly silent, he wished it to be understood that he had no intention of following other speakers through the contradictory evidence that had been brought under the notice of the House; yet this at least he would say, that two-thirds of the observations which the House had heard might very well have been listened to in Committee, but they appeared to him to contain no reason whatever against going into Committee. There remained, then, another topic upon which he might address them, and that was public processions. He should certainly oppose any Act that authorized any processions, especially of the host, through the public streets. For his part, he condemned any public procession of the host. Those who thought as he did could not fail to regard the adorable sacrament with sentiments which rendered it impossible for them to be willing that it should be exposed to the ribaldry or cause the riots which might arise from the conduct or the language of those who differed from Catholics on religious subjects. It was well known that in Malta processions

of the kind to which he referred had taken place; it was well known that a captain of artillery refused to give orders for firing in the manner that was expected and wished for upon such occasions. That officer conscientiously refused to do so. The result was, that he lost his commission, and in a professional point of view was ruined. Whenever the case of that officer was brought before the House of Commons he (Mr. O'Connell) always voted in his favour; and he should continue to do so in the case of any other officer similarly circumstanced. The next subject upon which he had to say a few words was that of schools, but even into that subject he should not enter at any length. As the law at present stood, the bishop might refuse to license a school in any diocese of England; but in Ireland that restriction had many years ago been removed, at least so far as Catholics were concerned. He recollected that one of the first professional engagements which he had held was against the Bishop of Cork, for proceeding against a Catholic schoolmaster for not having a license. The law in Ireland should be the same as the law of England on the subject. As to the ecclesiastical courts, the practice of excluding Catholic proctors was a great grievance in Ireland as well as here. In Ireland a Catholic barrister might practise in their courts. The anomaly then existed that a Catholic barrister might practise in their courts, but a Catholic proctor could not. He could not sit down without saying a few words respecting the ecclesiastical orders. With respect to nuns, there was no law against them. The superior of a religious establishment could not keep a lady in it if she chose to leave. There was no power to detain her twenty-four hours. There was no instance of any one thus leaving a religious establishment; but there was no compulsion in them. The noble Lord seemed to have an impression on his mind unfavourable to the Jesuits. This was because he had not had the opportunity or inducement to consult or consider the history of that most illustrious order. He (Mr. O'Connell) had well considered it; and he was satisfied that there never existed a body of men who were greater benefactors to science and literature as well as to religion. That order had experienced more injurious treatment from Catholics than Protestants. He believed that their virtues were made crimes; and that the strict discipline which they enforced operated against them. He would challenge any man to give him time and date, and state any circumstance disgraceful to the character of the Jesuits, which he was not able to refute. No man could be admitted a Jesuit until after twelve years of religious exercise and study, and devoting five years to the instruction of youth. Then at the expiration he might or might not be admitted into the order. It could not be disputed that many of the most distinguished men of science and literature belonged to this order, notwithstanding all that had been said against them. The authority of Pascal, although an elegant writer, was not of any great weight on this subject. This would be apparent to any one who would look into the facts of the case. His book turned merely on a crotchet. There was another person, however, who had recently made some atrocious attacks upon them. Michelet was not an author to be quoted as an authority either here or elsewhere. He was a writer of romances of the most atrocious nature against the Jesuits. How he succeeded in France was by drawing on his imagination instead of upon authorities. There was not one assertion of crime which he had alleged on the part of the Jesuits, which was not without foundation. The Jesuits were subject to the civil law, like other men; and if they were guilty of crimes, they could be punished. The truth was, that they had drawn persecution upon themselves in consequence of the purity of their lives. From what countries had they first been expelled and had suffered persecution? They had first been expelled from Portugal. He was sure no one would say that that was a most pure and enlightened country. They had then been expelled from Spain. He was sure no one would rise and say that that was a pure and enlightened country. But, thank God! they had revived again, and had diffused themselves over the face of the earth. They had sent, within a very short time, not less than fifty missionaries to Corea, Cochin-China, and Siam, and other places; and he had no doubt but that they would double the number next year. This was the first time that he had said anything in that House in favour of the Jesuits; but he had done so now because he regarded them as the greatest benefactors of science and literature.

Mr. PAKINGTON said, he could not refuse his assent to the second reading of this Bill. He estimated the blessings of religion, freedom, and liberty of conscience, as highly as any one; but he thought it

perfectly consistent with those feelings, and with a sincere attachment to the Protestant Church, of which he was a member, to vote for the principle of this Bill; which was the removal from the Statute-book of enactments which had not only become perfectly extinct, but which had been long abandoned. He thought, with the hon. and learned Mover of the second reading, that the time had arrived when those Acts ought to be no longer continued; and that the Established Church of this country ought to rest on the affections and religious faith of the people. Still, he did not suppose that there was no security whatever in legal enactments; and while supporting the spirit of the Bill, he was not inclined to go to the extent of its details. He was not prepared to abandon the safeguards imposed by the Emancipation Act of 1829. He had always been disposed to make concessions which were in the spirit of the Constitution. He should have voted for the Emancipation Act in 1829; last year he voted for the Maynooth measure; and he was prepared to carry those concessions further, as far as could be done without injury to the Protestant Constitution. But he was not prepared to do this in favour of the Roman Catholics, to the exclusion of other denominations of Christians, both at home and in the Colonies. He thought a Bill of this kind was better in the hands of Government than of a private Member: he understood a similar Bill was before the other House, introduced by the Lord Chancellor, and he was rather disposed to wait till that Bill was before the House. While agreeing in the principle of this Bill, he did not go to the full extent of its provisions; and he should join other hon. Members, in Committee, in very much reducing its extent.

MR. J. O'CONNELL merely rose for the purpose of saying, that he had had the happiness of spending several years in the early part of his life in the company of Jesuits, as he had been educated in the Jesuit College at Clongowes, and he had never heard a word or sentiment from them that was unworthy of a Christian, an enlightened gentleman, and a loyal subject.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that, in order to form a correct estimate of the principles of the Jesuits, the House ought to know something of their specific acts, and of their members, and where they existed. He could not agree in the eulogy which some hon. Members had passed on the Jesuits: that some credit might be due to them he would not deny; but he could not admit anything like what had been attributed to them. They had been expelled from most of the countries of Europe; and he was surprised at hearing hon. Gentlemen opposite denominate Spain and Portugal, whence the Jesuits had been expelled, ignorant countries, which had been the very focus of the faith they professed. He could only say, that whenever the Roman Catholic religion was advocated as being every thing that was generous and estimable, he was surprised that he had not heard those countries quoted as evidence of its merits. The hon. Member for Cork congratulated the House on the increase of the order of Jesuits; but, looking at the amount of social happiness and welfare prevailing in that part of this Empire, Ireland, where their influence was most powerful, he did not consider it at all a recommendation of their principles. Their very existence involved a principle of secrecy, which was contrary to all the principles of our Constitution. If the object of this Bill were merely to remove obsolete Statutes, why had the last clause been introduced? He hoped the noble Lord the Member for London would act consistently with the principles he had avowed last year, in the discussions on the Maynooth Bill. It would afford him the highest satisfaction to see the noble Lord making a stand against this Bill. The most distinguished statesmen of this country had been opposed to the removal of the restrictions that existed upon the Jesuits, on account of their machinations in all countries in Europe. Judging by the exertions making elsewhere by this body, there was no doubt they were busily at work in this country. He felt it his duty, under the circumstances in which the country was placed, to support the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford.

LORD J. MANNERS thought his hon. Friend near him had asked questions to which his own speech had given an answer. He said the penalties on the Statute-book were never enforced, that they were obsolete; and then asked why they should not be maintained? He would answer in the words of his hon. Friend, because they were inoperative and obsolete. His hon. Friend had spoken of these restrictions as safeguards; but he could not see what safety was in enactments never enforced, and if enforced, would be so grievous, that even his hon. Friend himself would consent

to their repeal. His hon. Friend who proposed the second reading, had found fault with certain penalties, and alluded to certain grievances, which the Bill, after all, would not affect. He instanced the case of bequests of property and money to Roman Catholic establishments. He said this Bill would not remove such disability; but his hon Friend would allow him to say that there was no law absolutely prohibitory of such bequests to Roman Catholic establishments. It was under an Act of Elizabeth, which he proposed to repeal, that they became invalid. But his hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford said, they were not penalties which ought to be enforced; but what consolation could it afford to him, or to any member of the Church of England, to retain on the Statute-book measures which were only defensible because they could not be enforced. His hon. Friend said, he would remove them when some practical grievance resulted from their enforcement. He differed from his hon. Friend; for he believed in the old adage, that it was absurd to shut the stable door when the horse was stolen. He would wait until some evil-disposed person brought down the terrors of the law against the "Christian Brothers," or some other religious society, and then set about repealing the law by which the hardship was inflicted. In reference to what had been stated by the hon. Member for Rutland, that it would be impossible to affect the Jesuits, he would go further, and say, that he should rejoice to see the Jesuits and the other religious orders recognised, placed under the authority of the Crown, and visited by some responsible commission. He could not sympathize in the fears which had been expressed respecting the Jesuits and other religious orders. Hundreds of years ago the Templars were looked upon in the same light as the Jesuits were now. There was no monstrosity too horrible to be attributed to them then. There was no monstrosity too horrible to be attributed to the Jesuits at the present day. Such feelings had no foundation in fact. In a journal of great and deserved celebrity, *The Spectator*, there appeared, not long since, the following remarks:—

"There are two sets of Jesuits—the Jesuits of fact, and the Jesuits of fiction; and as there are more readers of romances than students of history, the latter are more familar to the public. The Jesuits of fiction will be admitted on all hands to be terrible fellows; but their proper place is in the circulating library, not in polemical and far less in political discussions. The Jesuits of fact closely resemble all other respectable Romish clergymen, except in so far as their order has long supplied the most accomplished members of that body. In the history of every branch of science and literature, distinguished Jesuits are met with; the practice and theory of education are deeply indebted to their experiments; among the earliest and most ably planned missions to the heathen were those of the Jesuits."

It should not be forgotten that our recent success, and the extension of our commerce to China, were in a great measure attributable to the Jesuits, who were the first to introduce the Christian religion and civilization into China. What that order had performed in the cause of religion and humanity ought not to be overlooked. The sort of alarm attempted to be raised about Jesuits at this time of day, was altogether absurd—the revival of an old prejudice unworthy of the age. With respect to the other religious orders, could anybody stand up in that House, and, looking at the state of the manufacturing districts and the ignorant demoralising condition of their inhabitants, say it was a time to put a stop to the exercise of charitable duties administered by religious bodies. By a return made by one of these religious institutions in Leicestershire, it appeared that—

"During the year 1845 we have given lodging to 2,758 poor distressed travellers and workmen. We have given portions of food to 18,887 in distress during the same year."

Instead of putting down by penalties institutions of a similar nature, it would be well to take warning and example by what they did. Instead of punishing the Christian Brothers of Birmingham, or the Cistercians of Mount Melleray, it would be well to imitate their example. The present laws had proved inoperative in practice; and there was a strong feeling, in which he largely shared, that they were indefensible in argument. If, then, they were inoperative in practice and indefensible in argument, the time was come when they should cease to sully the dignity of the English Statute-book.

Mr. ESTCOURT could not consent to abrogate those safeguards for the faith of the country which the Act of 1829 established. It might be said, that those enactments were inoperative, but at the time when that Act was passed they were looked upon as being of very considerable importance; and during the discussions which took place upon the subject his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government dwelt very forcibly upon the offence which Protestants would justly feel at

the public and ostentatious assumption by officials of the Roman Catholic Church of those titles which rightfully belonged only to the dignitaries of the Established Church. The late Lord Tenterden also, whose opinion was deserving of much respect, had expressed his strong feeling against the assumption of such titles by the Roman Catholic bishops. When he coupled these considerations with the arguments which were heard relative to the necessity of a different disposition of the temporalities of the Irish Church, if it was the object of the Legislature to conciliate the Roman Catholics of that country, he could not but regard this Bill as replete with danger, and must therefore oppose it.

MR. BORTHWICK said, he had risen to seek the Speaker's eye with an eagerness, he feared, disproportioned to the importance of anything he had to say. His object, mainly, in rising, was to explain a word by which he had, he hoped not discourteously, interrupted a part of the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyne. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Colquhoun) was at the time arguing from evidence given before a Committee of that House, that the Church of Rome authorized the interference, on spiritual grounds, of her clergy in the election of Members to that House. He believed, for his part, that such interference was contrary to the doctrines of the Church of Rome, as it was, indeed, to those of every other Christian church; but if it were sanctioned by the practices of priests in Ireland, he could only say that there was nothing in the present Bill which would either prevent or encourage it. The point was, therefore, irrelevant. Now, he would decidedly vote for the Motion before the House. He believed the Bill to be founded on that large and liberal charity which was the child of Christianity, and the mother of the Church of England. He believed he had correctly, though by a figure, expressed his view of the case. Christianity had introduced into the world a charity more universal and purer than was known to any other religion; and that charity had given birth to, as it sustained, the pure and reformed Establishment under which it was our happiness to live. But when he had said this, he had said all which he felt was likely to be very well received by the series of speakers who on either side had continued that debate. He liked liberality and charity; but he owned he was not partial to the somewhat illiberal—he would say almost ferocious—assertion of these principles, to which they had that day listened. He did not, for example, think it was any answer to the arguments upon such subjects of his noble Friend the Member for Newark, that an hon. Gentleman fresh from the study of Shakspeare, recommended by the hon. Gentleman below (Mr. Colquhoun), should turn round upon his noble Friend (Lord John Manners) and say, "Get thee to a nunnery!" Nor could he, on the other hand, agree with the noble Lord opposite, the distinguished Knight of the Shire for the West Riding. That noble Lord had ridden into the lists armed cap-a-pie, and jauntily, with an air so simple and gracious that he reminded him of the knight in Chaucer, attacked the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford—

> "In his port as meek as is a maid,
> He never yet ne villanie had said
> In all his life unto no manner wight,
> He was a very parfit gentle knight."

But with all this gentleness, the noble Lord had not hesitated to call the opinions of those to whom he was opposed, "the rags and remnants of bigotry." Such language, he thought, could aid no cause, and convinced him that there might be a bigotry even in liberality. He would say but one word more, and that upon the subject of the Jesuits. He sincerely trusted that whatever might be our various opinions on other subjects, the brilliant masses of nonsense which in the *Juif Errant* had been directed by Eugene Sue against the principles alike of morality and religion, might never become popular with the youth of this country. There was in those volumes more which was at variance with Christian morals and Christianity itself—more that was revolting to every well-constituted mind—than ever their worst enemies had alleged against the Jesuits.

MR. MILNES said, that so far as he was concerned he should have preferred that the discussion had been taken on the Bill proposed by Her Majesty's Government, because the present measure might perhaps be regarded in a false light by some out of doors. He should, however, support the second reading of the Bill now before the House, which he thought would not promote Catholic interests exclusively, but would conduce to the benefit of the whole community, by giving a large measure of toleration to all Her Majesty's subjects. He had resided for many years in Catholic countries, and had attended at the celebration of the worship of the Es-

tablished Church of England, under the very walls of the Vatican. He was glad to find the spirit of mutual forbearance and Christian charity spreading throughout the various sects of religionists in Europe, and thought that if we removed these offensive enactments from our Statute-books it would have a good effect with the Catholic nations of the Continent. He could say this, that a few days since he had been assured that the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government was a professed Jesuit. He could assure the House the observation was made to him in perfect good faith; and, indeed, the hon. Member for Rutlandshire seemed to carry his fears so far so as to admit the justice of the supposition. He hoped that they would eschew these absurd delusions about Jesuits, and remove for ever from the Statute-book these odious penalties and disabilities.

COLONEL SIBTHORP could adopt, in reference to this measure, but one course, and that was the consistent course, and the same that he had pursued in reference to the grant to the College of Maynooth. He did hope that the hon. Member for Oxford would take a division on his Amendment. He would say that the Protestant Church was much indebted to the hon. Member for the great ability, great exertion, and consistency which he had evinced in defending it. With regard to this measure, he would support the suggestion of the hon. Member for Oxford, because he feared that, to leave the Amendment of the right hon. Baronet unsupported, would have the effect of undermining the Protestant religion in this country.

CAPTAIN HARRIS thought that if any unpleasantness was attached to the subject of religion, it was entirely owing to the remissness of Government. The result of the Bill's being brought forward in its present form was, that extravagant encomiums had been passed by several hon. Gentlemen on the order of Jesuits. He did not think, however, that the Bill would pass the House of Lords.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL did not wish to enter into any further argument upon the Bill. He merely wished to make a few observations with regard to the penalties to which Roman Catholics had been subjected by former enactments. There was some doubt upon the question whether the penalties which formerly attached to the holding of any intercourse by subjects of these realms with the See of Rome had been repealed. Many years ago, he had heard Mr. Canning state in that House, that he had taken the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, who were decided that no letter could be written to the Court of Rome without incurring a premunire. He had not read the Bill at present before the House, and he, therefore, did not know whether it repealed those penalties or not. But it appeared to him, that all such penalties should be repealed; and if the Bill were not so framed as to remove them, he should suggest the propriety of inserting a clause in Committee for the purpose.

MR. B. ESCOTT said, that an opinion had been lately taken upon the subject mentioned by the noble Lord, and it appeared that those penalties could not be levied. However, if it should appear that such were not the case, or that too much doubt existed upon the subject, he (Mr. Escott) should be happy to introduce in Committee a clause to effect their total repeal.

MR. P. HOWARD wished to correct an hon. Member opposite, who was wrong in his idea of the existing law in France regarding the Jesuits. The law did not expel them; but each community was limited to twenty in number.

MR. B. ESCOTT replied. He said that in this Act he wished to introduce a clause which would prevent Roman Catholic clergymen from celebrating any religious ceremony in any public place, and which would also prohibit any processions of Roman Catholics in any public street or way. He thanked the House most extremely for the manner in which the Bill had been generally received; and he also felt thankful to those hon. Gentlemen, particularly the Member for the University of Oxford, for the arguments which they had brought forward against it. Those hon. Gentlemen begun by saying that those Acts which were obsolete should be repealed; and then they said that if there were any statutes which were of serious inconvenience to any persuasion, they ought to be repealed. He fully agreed with them so far, and thought those penal statutes which were in existence were either obsolete or inconvenient, and therefore ought to be repealed. If they were obsolete, then they were of no use, and ought to be abolished; and if they were penal, then that was a still stronger reason for their repeal.

The House divided on the Question, that the word "now" stand part of the

Question :—Ayes 66; Noes 23 : Majority 43.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.	Lockhart, A. E.
Aldam, W.	Mackinnon, W. A.
Archbold, R.	M'Carthy, A.
Baine, W.	McGeachy, F. A.
Blake, M. J.	Milnes, R. M.
Borthwick, P.	Mitcalfe, H.
Bowring, Dr.	Morpeth, Visct.
Bridgeman, H.	Norreys, Sir D. J.
Brotherton, J.	O'Brien, W. S.
Browne, hon. W.	O'Connell, D.
Butler, hon. Col.	O'Connell, M. J.
Cowper, hon. W. F.	O'Connell, J.
Crawford, W. S.	Pakington, J. S.
Dawson, hon. T. V.	Pechell, Capt.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.	Rawdon, Col.
Dodd, G.	Russell, Lord J.
Duncombe, T.	Somerville, Sir W. M.
Ebrington, Visct.	Stansfield, W. R. C.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.	Stanton, W. H.
Elphinstone, H.	Strickland, Sir G.
Evans, W.	Thornely, T.
Ewart, W.	Trelawny, J. S.
Fielden, J.	Tufnell, H.
Fitzgerald, R. A.	Vane, Lord H.
Forster, M.	Warburton, H.
Gibson, T. M.	Wawn, J. T.
Gisborne, T.	White, S.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.	Williams, W.
Greene, T.	Wood, C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.	Worsley, Lord
Hawes, B.	Wyse, T.
Heathcoat, J.	
Herbert, rt. hon. S.	TELLERS.
Howard, P. H.	Escott, B.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.	Manners, Lord J.

List of the NOES.

Beresford, Major	Hope, Sir J.
Broadley, H.	Neeld, J.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Newdegate, C. N.
Cole, hon. H. A.	Packe, C. W.
Duncombe, hon. A.	Rolleston, Col.
Duncombe, hon. O.	Seymer, H. K.
Estcourt, T. G. B.	Sibthorp, Col.
Finch, G.	Spooner, R.
Floyer, J.	Tollemache, J.
Fuller, A. E.	Waddington, H. S.
Grogan, E.	TELLERS.
Harris, hon. Capt.	Inglis, Sir R. H.
Hodgson, R.	Colquhoun, J.

PAYMENT OF OUT-PENSIONERS BILL.

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT moved the Second Reading of this Bill.

CAPTAIN PECHELL briefly expressed his dissent from the principles of this Bill, as its operation was by no means calculated to benefit the interests of, or to give satisfaction to these veterans. He objected to the transfer of the payment of the pensioners of Greenwich and Chelsea from the hands of the Admiralty to the hands of the Secretary at War. These pensioners never would consent to be placed under the authority of the Horse Guards. It was provided by this Bill, that these persons' pensions should be paid to Poor Law guardians, to distribute it to them for assistance. He thought that was a gross abuse; for these pensions were originally intended as rewards for past services. He knew an instance in which a board of guardians had, for a long time, withheld the payment of a pension to a poor man after quarter-day came. He thought that it was a most extraordinary thing to put the payment of the pension in the hands of staff officers without the slightest explanation. The intention of the Bill was, to transfer all persons having pensions, he might say, bag and baggage, from under the control of the Admiralty into the hands of the Horse Guards. There was a reservation clause certainly; but he contended that it was of no use whatever.

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT said, the principal object of this Bill was to simplify the mode in which the pensioners received their pay; and, so far from its inflicting any hardship upon them, it was proposed for the express purpose of promoting their interest. He begged to inform the hon. and gallant Member that naval pensioners were now enabled to receive their pensions while serving on board Her Majesty's ships. This Bill would not remove pensioners from the control of the Admiralty, but would place the arrangements for their payment in the hands of the Secretary at War. The naval pensions would still be granted and withdrawn by the Admiralty; but the pensions would be paid by staff officers, who at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and other naval stations, would generally be marine or naval officers. He begged to inform the hon. and gallant Officer who had adverted to the receipt of pensioners' pay by boards of guardians when they became inmates of workhouses, that at one time a great number of the pensioners dissipated their pay within a few days after they received it, and then threw themselves upon the poor rates until their pensions were again due. Not long since no less than 6,000 pensioners were in this situation; but since the arrangement was effected enabling the guardians to defray the expense of maintaining such persons from their subsequent pensions, the system was nearly at an end. He would, however, propose that the guardians, instead of being empowered to attach the whole pension in such cases, should only be enabled to take such portion as was necessary to defray the expenses of maintaining pensioners who were inmates of

workhouses. He trusted that, under the circumstances, there would be no opposition to the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read read a second time.

SUPPLY.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, and on the Motion of

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, the sum of 8,000,000*l.* was voted to the use of Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund.

LACE FACTORIES.

MR. T. S. DUNCOMBE, in rising to ask for leave to bring in a Bill to limit the hours of night labour in all factories where bobbin net and warp lace machinery is employed, begged first to present a petition on which the Bill was founded. It was signed by 3,420 workmen engaged in the lace trade; and he should add, that his hon. Friend the Member for North Nottinghamshire had already presented a similar petition signed by the masters; so that he was happy in being enabled to cite the present as one of the few instances in which the masters and workmen agreed in their opinions. The petitioners prayed that the hours of labour might be limited to from six o'clock in the morning until ten at night; that no children under eight years of age should be permitted to be employed; and that no person whatsoever should be allowed to work before six o'clock in the morning, or after ten o'clock at night. As he (Mr. Duncombe) understood from the right hon. Baronet opposite that there would be no objection to the introduction of such a measure at the present (although the right hon. Baronet held himself free as to the course he might find it necessary to adopt subsequently), he hoped he need not then occupy the time of the House longer than by barely stating the nature of the measure. It would be, perhaps, better that he should go more fully into the reasons for its introduction on the second reading.

SIR J. GRAHAM had always had an objection to interfering with the hours of labour. The hon. Gentleman had stated, very fairly, that he had not refused his assent to such a Bill as this being brought in, particularly as that step would not hinder him from pursuing any course he might think fit on a future occasion, and as before the second reading he would have an opportunity of reading all its provisions, and of seeing what was objectionable. He always understood that the lace trade was different from the bulk of those businesses in which machinery was the chief means of production; and that, therefore, there was not the same objection to long hours in this business; but when the Bill was brought in, he would be able to state more explicitly his opinion respecting it.

SIR G. STRICKLAND said, that the Bill about to be introduced was in direct opposition to the rules which had always been laid down, of not interfering between the adult labourer and his employer. It was going in the teeth of all they had been doing during the last twelve years. He had another objection to this Bill, for it appeared that it would allow children of tender age to be engaged during the excessive hours of from six in the morning till ten at night; and he thought, therefore, that it would be but wise in the hon. Gentlemen who were about to bring in this Bill to attend to this particular point.

Leave given. House adjourned at half-past five.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 12, 1846.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Borough Commissioners of the Town of Kinsale, for Alteration of the Irish Poor Law with respect to the Rating of Electoral Divisions.—From Londonderry, for the Better Regulation, and more Efficient Support, of Medical Charities (Ireland).—From Clotworthy Dobbin Devitt, late of the General Post Office, Dublin, complaining of having been dismissed from his Appointment, for Inquiry into his Case, and for Relief.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND) BILL.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS moved the further consideration of the Report on this Bill.

The LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving an Amendment of which he had given notice, said the clause would require to be altered, as related to the words "proofs whereof." His Amendment would place the word "whereof" so as to apply only "to the lawfulnes of the occasion" of absence during the prohibited hours, and not to "suspicious circumstances."

Clause as amended agreed to.

The LORD CHANCELLOR having moved a verbal amendment to the clause relating to the protection of jurors and witnesses,

The EARL of CLANCARTY said, he wished to be informed if there was any law in Ireland, when murder or other capital crime was committed, to compel the attendance of witnesses? He wished to hear

an answer from the noble and learned Lord opposite, who at one time held the highest judicial position in that country.

LORD CAMPBELL informed the noble Earl that his tenure of office was but for a moment. If there were not higher authorities than himself he would at once reply; but he advised the noble Earl to apply to the noble Lord on the woolsack for the information he required.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, March 13, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª. Metropolitan Buildings. 3ª. and passed. Protection of Life (Ireland) (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Earl Fortescue, from a Public Meeting of Landowners and others, assembled at Totnes, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Lord Campbell, from Inhabitants of the Parish of Rathfarnham, against the Protection to Life (Ireland) Bill.—By Lord Brougham, from James Kibble, of Greenock, complaining of Deception practised towards him by the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock, and Ayr, and Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock Railway Companies, and praying for Investigation and Relief.—From Master, Wardens, Freemen, and Commonalty, of the Mystery of Vintners, praying to be exempted from the Operation of, and to be heard by Counsel against, the Charitable Trusts Bill.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND) BILL.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS having moved the third reading of this Bill,

LORD CAMPBELL directed attention to the injurious and unjust effect which the 11th Clause of the Bill would have if left in its present form, as it made it a misdemeanor punishable with transportation for any person to be in any dwelling-house one hour before sunrise, or one hour after sunset, if in that dwelling-house there should be consumed any malt or spirituous liquors, without saying one word about being so found under suspicious circumstances. So that the *corpus delicti* consisted simply in being in a house in which malt or spirituous liquors were sold or consumed, although the person so offending might be there for a just and lawful purpose. But according to the wording of the 11th Clause, it would be no defence for him to show that he was there for a lawful purpose. The noble and learned Lord illustrated the injustice and inconvenience of such an enactment by observing that a person wishing to buy groceries for a family, and proceeding to an establishment for that purpose, after sunset, would not be guilty of a misdemeanor, because he could show, while on the highway, that he was about a lawful purpose; but, once he entered the grocery establishment, if malt or spirituous liquors should be sold or consumed in it, he became guilty of a misdemeanor, and subjected himself to be transported for seven years.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The clause shall be altered.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS complained of the noble and learned Lord for not having suggested the alteration he required when the Bill was in Committee, or on the bringing up of the Report. The clause in question had not been altered or amended since the printing of the Bill; and if the noble and learned Lord had suggested the alteration even privately to the the noble and learned Lord on the woolsack, his communication would have received every attention. The clause was intended to apply only to public houses that were not licensed, commonly called "shebeen" houses.

The LORD CHANCELLOR, to meet the objection of the noble and learned Lord, moved to alter the clause by leaving out the word "consumed," and inserting, instead, the words "usually sold." This alteration, he thought, would make the clause more satisfactory, and render it impossible to be applied in the cases cited by the noble and learned Lord.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS was quite willing to adopt the Amendment suggested by his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read 3ª. and passed.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, March 13, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Nottingham County (Northern Division), Lord Henry Bentinck.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Lace Factories; Poor Removal; Fever (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Arthur Taylor, from Landowners, Farmers, Tradesmen, and others of Bellbroughton, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Lord John Russell and Mr. Wynn Ellis, from Importers and Manufacturers of Silk Goods, for a Speedy Adjustment of the Silk Duties.—By Mr. Hinde, from Members of the Committee of the General Shipowners' Association of London, against the proposed Measure respecting Timber.—By Mr. Jervis, from Churchwardens and Vestrymen of the United Parishes of Saint Margaret and St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, against Institution of Night Asylums for the Poor.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Factory Workers in the Employ of Mr. Lord, in the Township of Manchester, for Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from George Phillips, Licensed Victualler, in the Borough of Leicester, complaining of Post Office Mismanagement.

SPANISH SUGARS.

LORD J. RUSSELL apprehended that the right hon. Baronet would be able at once to answer the question he was about to put. In the Papers presented as the correspondence with Spain, Lord Aberdeed stated that it was intended to make a proposition to the Government of Spain on the commercial relations of the two countries, but he added that it was not intended to touch the question of the Slave Trade. The question he had to ask was, whether it was proposed, or not proposed, to admit the sugars of the Spanish Colonies as those of the most favoured nations?

SIR R. PEEL said, that the proposal made by Government did not contemplate the admission of the sugar of Cuba.

FAMINE IN IRELAND.

MR. P. SCROPE would ask a question now which he had given notice he would put yesterday, when the House did not sit. It was this—Whether the measures of Government for meeting the impending scarcity in Ireland, contained any guarantee that every individual in immediate danger of perishing from want, should be enabled to obtain relief from some local authority, as in England? Every day more and more distressing accounts were received; and the right hon. Secretary of State would, therefore, not think it impertinent in him to inquire whether Ministers meant to undertake the responsibility of securing those who were in danger of perishing from destitution in Ireland, from such a calamity? Not that he considered it within their province so to do; but the course they had taken seemed to impose upon them that responsibility. He thought that the duty properly belonged to the local authorities, to the boards of guardians and the landlords; but Ministers appeared to have taken the burden off their shoulders, and to have put it upon their own. In England, if any such calamity occurred as that which now threatened Ireland, it would not be the duty of Government to interfere: the Poor Law guardians in the different Unions would have to apply a remedy to the emergency. They would have done so, no doubt, from the commencement of the winter; but in Ireland the case was different; there, the boards of guardians had not only no right to relieve the poor out of doors, but they were expressly forbidden from giving relief in any other shape than by admission into the workhouse. The workhouses were only calculated to contain about one per cent of the population, so that in some Unions not more than twenty or thirty paupers could be relieved. Under these circumstances, the course that seemed to him open to Government was, to bring in a Bill into Parliament, at the beginning of the Session, to require and authorize guardians of the poor to make provision for the relief of the destitute in their districts. That, in his opiuion, would have been the proper course; but Government had undertaken to secure the population of Ireland against famine. He had no wish to detain the House, but merely to preface his question, and to explain how it was that Ministers had volunteered a responsibility that in fact belonged to the owners of land and property in Ireland. He thought that the first right to the food grown in Ireland lay in the people of Ireland. If it should be the determination of Ministers not to allow outdoor relief, he should feel it his duty to bring a measure or a resolution upon the subject before the House. The hon. Member concluded by repeating his question in the terms he had before used.

SIR J. GRAHAM wished to answer the question immediately. Certainly, the attention of Government had been directed with peculiar anxiety to this very difficult subject. The hon. Member sitting next to the hon. Gentleman who put the question, had spoken to him (Sir J. Graham) upon the point about a fortnight ago, and he had then said that it was not the intention of a Government to propose any permanent measure for outdoor relief to the people of Ireland.

FEVER AND FAMINE (IRELAND).

SIR J. GRAHAM: I hope that, by the indulgence of the House, I may be permitted to make a Motion before it proceeds to the Orders of the Day. I ask this favour under circumstances of urgency. If the House had met yesterday, it was my intention to have made the Motion then, and it is for leave to bring in a Bill to make temporary provision for the treatment of destitute persons affected with fever in Ireland. Only yesterday morning Government received from the Lord Lieutenant a Report from the Commission appointed to watch the advance of distress arising out of the failure of the potato crop, announcing that, in all the provinces, almost in every county, and in various localities of different counties, dysentery, to a very formidable extent,

had made its appearance, attended by fever in many instances, and adding an apprehension that the fever would become general. Under these circumstances, the Members of Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that it was absolutely necessary to make some special provision; and I now ask leave to bring in a Bill for the object already stated. The substance of the measure I will briefly state. It asks that power should be given to the Lord Lieutenant to establish in Dublin a Board of Health, this board to be composed of commissioners, not more than five, already in the service of the public, and therefore requiring no additional salaries. It is proposed that three members of existing commissions shall be members of the Board of Health; and there is a medical officer already in the pay of Government who will be added to the body. It is proposed also that on the representation of this Board of Health power shall be given to the Lord Lieutenant to appoint in every Union a medical officer to be paid at the public expense; and on the representation of that medical officer that it is necessary, on account of the appearance of the fever in a formidable shape in the Union, to call upon the boards of guardians in the Unions either to build temporary fever hospitals, as in the case of Galway some years ago, or, failing that, to apply some existing edifice to the purpose. Provision is to be there made for the supply of medical assistance, medical comforts, food, and every thing necessary for the cure and treatment of fever at the expense of the Union. Power is also to be given to the boards of guardians to defray the expenses out of the poor rates. A provision will also be introduced that this measure shall only be of temporary duration. It is to be limited to the month of September 1847. Power will also be given in the Bill to the Lord Lieutenant, on the representation of the boards of guardians that fever has disappeared, to suspend its operation. I have now shortly stated the substance of the measure, and the House will see that no delay ought to be interposed. I shall therefore at once move for leave to bring in a Bill to make temporary provision for the relief of destitute persons afflicted with fever in Ireland.

MR. WAKLEY had expected that some Member of Parliament connected with Ireland would have followed the right hon. Baronet; but he could not omit this opportunity of saying that it seemed to him that prevention was better than cure. The right hon. Baronet said that additions were to be made to the Commissioners; that a board of health was to be established; that in different Unions medical officers were to be appointed; and that the Lord Lieutenant was to have the power to direct that fever hospitals should be prepared. This was all very well, but it must be attended with a heavy expense; and what he earnestly recommended was, that the money should be applied to the procuring of food for the people of Ireland. This ought to be done immediately, liberally, without stint, and without restraint. The experience of all medical men, in cases of fever arising from want of food, had proved distinctly and unequivocally, that do what you will to prevent its progress, but one remedy was successful, and that remedy was a supply of food. An able pamphlet had been published by Dr. Corrigan, in which he gave statistical details to show that no change of weather, no change of climate or condition of circumstances, would be effectual. Nothing would do but a change of food. As he had said, it was proposed that great expense should be incurred. Then, why not incur it in food? Why not give the people provisions, which was much better than giving them physic? The disease was now only commencing; it was in an incipient state, although in some districts it might have made considerable progress. This was the very time, then, to prevent the spread of fever by the spread of food. The question was between fever and food. Where fever had not yet made its appearance, let it be kept away by food. The supply ought to be sufficient and immediate; and he was sure that he only spoke the universal voice of England, when he said that every man would be delighted to learn, that a general and an adequate supply of food had been given to their Irish fellow subjects. Let it be borne in mind, that the great principle of prevention, in cases of fever, and, indeed, in all other cases, was better than cure. It ought to be a most serious consideration with Government how best to supply food; and by this means to put a stop to the progress of disease.

MR. COLQUHOUN was very much inclined to agree with the last speaker. This was no new case, for the same thing had happened in 1823; and he might refer to the experience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for its effects, when serious famine made its appearance in the west of Ireland. They would find that the appli-

cations then most earnestly made were for food. He believed that in 1831 there was a similar case; famine and disease broke out in that year, and that also received the only possible relief, which was in the shape of food. He would, therefore, most urgently entreat Her Majesty's Government, if medical relief was necessary, to bear in mind that food was of infinite importance.

Mr. OSBORNE expressed his fear that if Government was to provide food gratuitously for the distressed poor of Ireland, it would create a system of eleemosynary relief, which ought by all means to be avoided. He could conceive of nothing so mischievous as leading the people to look up to Government permanently for relief and food. He would rather call upon Government to provide some regular employment for them. It had been anticipated by many that a great deal of employment would be created before this time, by the Railway Bills that were passed last Session; but he believed it was a fact, that none of these companies had as yet put a spade into the ground, in consequence of the want of money. He would put the thing in a more tangible shape, and would call on the Government to make grants of loans of money to these railway companies; by which means they would be able to proceed with their works, and to give employment to the people. Of what benefit would it be to send food into the country, if the people had not wherewithal to buy it? He did not know whether he had properly understood the proposition of the hon. Member for Finsbury; but certainly nothing would be so injurious to the people as to establish a system of eleemosynary relief.

Lord G. BENTINCK was sure that no objection would be offered from any part of the House to any measure that might be proposed by Government, for the purpose of extending relief to Ireland; but he thought they were entitled to ask Her Majesty's Ministers to lay on the Table of that House the whole of the information on which they founded their proposition. He quite concurred with the hon. Member for Finsbury, in thinking that it was for want of food that the evil of fever was arising; and the best mode of remedying that evil was to take care that those who were in want should immediately receive food to relieve it. He thought the way to obtain that object would be, as he had stated on former occasions, to purchase Irish oats, wheat, and food of every description; and not to send for maize from the United States.

Mr. HUME said, the subject was one of very great importance. He was very much of opinion that it would require serious consideration whether they should make the whole people entirely dependent for food on the Government, or means should not rather be devised to find thom employment. In the case of public societies which gave relief to the entirely destitute, they had ample proof how very rapidly the number of claimants increased, and how unworthy of relief the parties were. He should fear very much that such a course would have the effect of lowering, instead of raising, the quality of their food. It had been said that Indian corn was likely to introduce a better description of food, and thereby to assist in raising the character and aspirations of those who used it; but he much feared, with his hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Osborne), that if they were to distribute it indiscriminately to those who were in want, they would be doing more harm than good to the people. Whatever measures might be devised, he should desire the Government to be very careful in their iniquiries, discriminating as to the application of relief, and chary of its distribution. He meant chary, not from any disinclination to relieve those who were really destitute, but lest relief should be bestowed on those who were not really in want, or were undeserving of it.

Mr. O'CONNELL could not agree with the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) that the best plan would be to purchase provisions in Ireland; for that would be to raise the price of provisions to those who wanted to purchase them, and make them generally dear. No: he could not but think the Government had done much more wisely. They had brought in a quantity of maize to replace the damaged potatoes, and caused it to be transported to Ireland under the Government auspices. Thus they certainly had added to the quantity. But he agreed with the suggession which had been offered by the hon. Member for Wycombe, in reference to railroads. Let it be remembered that these had to pay their deposits; he would not advise the Government to lend any money beyond the amount actually subscribed by the shareholders. If the shareholders in some instances had subscribed as much as 100,000*l.*, there would be great difficulty in getting in the calls; and it would only increase the distress of the country to get them in. Whenever such a sum had been advanced, let Government advance by way of loan, at interest,

a similar sum; this would put the railroads in operation directly. This would be better than giving the people physic for nothing; food was the best possible physic; but instead of giving the poor food without work, give them the means of earning wages, which would enable them to obtain food. Thus, in the midst of this calamity, there would be an opportunity of doing good by taking the railroads which had their deposits subscribed, and advancing them an equal sum.

Sir J. GRAHAM: Perhaps I may be permitted to explain to the hon. and learned Member and to the House, what has already been done towards giving the people employment by Government and by Parliament. In the first place, I would answer the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), with respect to the information on which we have called on the House specially to adopt this particular Bill. That information was only received yesterday; and I, on the part of the Government, shall have no difficulty whatever in laying on the Table a copy of extracts from this information. Even if the whole that we have received is not given, I am quite certain there will be more than enough to satisfy the House of the necessity for this Bill. With respect to what has fallen from the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Colquhoun), he has observed, most truly, that assistance was afforded to Ireland in 1832, partly by supplies of food, at a reduced cost, and partly by advances of money to public works. But, as has been already stated, the distress at that time was comparatively partial; it was confined, I believe, to two or three counties. But the difficulty with which we have now to contend pervades the whole of Ireland: it is to be found in every province, it is to be found in every county, it is to be found in every Poor Law Union, and, I believe, in almost every parish in Ireland. The course which Government has taken has been this. We have in particular parts of Ireland established depôts, where food can be bought at an easy price, at the very lowest price; and thinking, with the hon. Member for Wycombe, that eleemosynary relief ought to be avoided as much as possible, we propose to afford, to the utmost possible extent, either by means of public works to be undertaken, or by works already established, the means by which the people may be enabled to earn wages, and so to purchase food at the moderate cost at which it will be supplied. By the adoption of these means we hope to afford very general relief. Exceptions may occur, as in the case of persons who cannot work; those in extremity may require aid of another description; but cases of that kind will not be overlooked. Now, with regard to the works in progress: the hon. and learned Gentleman has been detained in Ireland, probably by other avocations, and we have not had the pleasure of his presence here; but he must be aware that in the course of the present Session, Acts of Parliament have passed, giving either advances or loans to the extent of 300,000*l.*, or nearly 400,000*l.* for the purpose of encouraging works in Ireland.

Mr. W. S. O'BRIEN: How do you make out 400,000*l.*

Sir JAMES GRAHAM: The hon. Member calls on me to state the particular sums that have been so voted. With respect to Public Works in Ireland, there is an absolute advance of 50,000*l.*; for the piers and harbours there is another advance of 50,000*l.* Then, under the Public Works Act, there is an ordinary circulating sum of 60,000*l.*, which is available this year as well as in each succeeding one. Then there is a further sum of 17,000*l.* or 18,000*l.* which has been specially granted for the previous inspection of works before they are undertaken, which expense would, under ordinary circumstances, have been partly paid by the counties, and partly by the promoters of the works. We have also included in these Bills clauses by which drainage and improvement of inland navigable waters may be provided for; and the many great works contemplated of that description will call for advances of 120,000*l.* or 130,000*l.* We are willing to entertain those propositions in the present year, and are prepared to approve of advances on that account. There is, in addition, another grant which received the sanction of the Legislature only about a fortnight ago, with reference to the presentments by the Grand Jury at extra sessions, for which another sum of 100,000*l.* has been specially demanded. Thus, I think, I have shown that a sum of nearly 400,000*l.* has been granted; and, as my right hon. Friend near me has stated, instructions are given, upon the responsibility of the Government, to relieve unforeseen emergencies which it would be inexpedient in me to detail. But I may state, generally, that there is no portion of this distress, however wide spread or however lamentable, for which

Government has not endeavoured, either by legislation, by relief given in money, or by a sufficient supply of food, to provide a remedy, or at least an alleviation. With reference to this particular case of fever, I quite agree with the hon. Member for Finsbury. I believe that the fever in this case, as almost always in Ireland, may be traced either to an insufficiency of food, or to the use of food of a tainted kind. The great object, therefore, is to check the progress of fever, by providing better food. The best mode of doing this, in reference to the people there, is by providing them with work, and giving them wages for work; and I have already stated to the House the measures which have been adopted, not only last year, but in the present Session, for that purpose. In the course of the evening, either the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) or myself, may move for a copy of extracts from the information we have received; and I shall be most ready to lay them on the Table of the House.

Mr. W. SMITH O'BRIEN was bound to say, with regard to the sums of money mentioned by the right hon. Baronet as having been, on a former occasion, voted by the House for the relief of Ireland, that, as far as his own information went, not one single guinea had ever been expended in the manner prescribed. He was also bound to tell the right hon. Baronet that 100,000 of his fellow creatures in Ireland were famishing. He had himself departed thence only a week, and he had more than once seen whole families sitting down to a meal of potatoes which any Member of that House would be sorry to offer to his hogs. Under such circumstances, did it not become the House to consider in which way they could deal with the crisis? He would tell them frankly—and it was a feeling participated in by the majority of Irishmen —that he was not disposed to appeal to their generosity. There was no generosity in the matter. They had taken, and they had tied, the purse-strings of the Irish purse. Irishmen had been taunted and belied by the English press; and now, even in that House, he saw something of the same character. But he would not dwell on such a topic at the present momoment: as an individual, he thought that the Irish people were themselves able to provide for the calamity with which they were visited out of the national resources of Ireland; and he also considered that, if the House compelled the proprietors of land in Ireland to do that duty which they ought to do to the people, there would be neither disturbance nor starvation. It was a measure of that kind which was wanting. They ought in the very first instance, and before all else, to compel—for nothing but compulsion would be successful—the absentee Irish landlords, squandering away their fortunes in London and in other parts of England and Europe, to return to their estates, and there to fulfil the ordinary duties which humanity dictated to those placed beneath them in point of wealth. He was indeed well aware that at such a time, in such a country, to allay such distress, individual exertion, however humane and however generous, could do little; but by something of the nature of an equitable Property Tax, which would affect not only the proprietor of land, but also those who collected and received a portion of the revenue of the land, a great deal could be done; and to such a tax neither he, nor he believed, any other Irish Member would object. If they adopted measures founded on the principle of the Bill introduced into the House of Lords last year by Lord Stanley, that of giving compensation to tenants who had expended capital in the improvement of their farms, they would be opening up sources of employment which had hitherto, and most unfortunately, been completely unknown. He (Mr. S. O'Brien) had to apologize for speaking on this subject; he would not have addressed the House at all if he had not felt himself coerced to it. He had also to apologize for speaking in a tone which could not be acceptable to the House; but he was sure, at the same time, the House would feel that, circumstanced as they were in Ireland, they could not be merely passive spectators of the contingencies with which they were threatened. He was bound frankly to tell the truth; and he, for one, was not prepared nor disposed to make an appeal to English generosity. What Ireland claimed from a British Parliament was just legislation—a legislation which should compel the landed proprietors to do their duty to the people—a legislation which, once obtained, would satisfy and appease every demand.

Mr. AGLIONBY was extremely anxious to say one word on this subject. He did not believe there was one English Member who was inclined to treat the question as one of generosity, or who would not be ready to go as far in kindness to his fellow subjects as the hon. Member for Limerick, or any one else. He very much feared,

however, that speeches of the nature they had just heard would only have the effect, or rather would tend to create inflammatory feelings in the minds of the Irish against that House. He hoped that the measures Government had adopted, and which the House would continue to support, would satisfy that country how deeply-seated were their feelings of commiseration for that distress. They deeply felt for that distress, and deeply did they sympathize with their misery. The question, however, was how they were to deal with it. He hoped that something better might be devised than had yet been done by the Government, though he did not yet see his way clearly. The hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley) had indeed shadowed forth something, but in such vague and indistinct terms that he feared nobody had understood him, though he did not believe anybody cared whether they understood him or not. It was, that they were to bestow eleemosynary gifts, and to give large sums for the purchase of food. If this were what the hon. Member did mean, he begged leave to differ from him; for nothing could be more demoralising than to give temporary relief with any view of benefiting the people. If they did this, in his opinion it would not really benefit them, and would hardly even be received as a boon. He thought, with the hon. and learned Member for Cork, that the introduction of maize would to a certain extent afford relief to the destitute population of Ireland; but he, for one, feared that that relief fell very far short of what ought to be given. He very much feared that the alteration of the Corn Law would be inadequate to give the relief required. They must apply some more immediate remedy than giving corn cheap some months hence, and giving more some years hence. This would not meet the existing evils; still less would the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck,) to purchase oatmeal and flour for the purpose of distributing it to the Irish people.

Sir R. PEEL: I was sorry to hear the imputations passed by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) who opposes the introduction of the Bill proposed by Government, on the House, and on the English Members of this House more particularly. I think nothing can have been more marked than the disposition of this House to introduce and to adopt every measure which could, by possibility, mitigate the evils of scarcity, and of disease consequent upon that scarcity, in Ireland; and even those who dissented from the course taken upon many other points by Her Majesty's Government have manifested a most earnest, most eager, desire, to co-operate with us in this great object. Now, I do not think, as has been said, that the evil is of a temporary nature. On the contrary, I think you will find that it has much of a character of permanency, and that, at any rate, it will continue much beyond the present year; and my impressions, originally, were so strong on this subject, that they justified me in considering something more than temporary measures should be taken. And in the absence of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. O'Brien) we have been occupied the whole of this Session, so far as it has yet advanced, in giving precedence over every other business to those measures which had for their object giving relief to Ireland; and whatever differences of opinion in other respects may have prevailed, we were unanimous in deferring every thing else to the measures for the amelioration of Irish distress. And they passed almost, too, without discussion. There was a wish on both sides of the House to give every facility; and now the hon. Gentleman comes down, two months or six weeks after, only to say that the Irish scorns to profit by English generosity. He has also proposed that we should have an Income Tax for Ireland. Well, will the hon. Gentleman have an Income Tax for a limited period—for six months? Will he propose and arrange the whole machinery of such a task? And how long does he think it will be before the Income Tax for Ireland, to endure for a limited period, shall pass this House? But then the hon. Gentleman will say, the reflection he makes is not on English Members, or on this House; it is upon Irish proprietors. He complains in his speech that Irish proprietors will not perform that moral duty which is imposed on them and on all great landowners—a duty which they will refuse, he states, to acknowledge without the interference of the law. Now, I say at once, that unless Irish proprietors are ready to come forward and to co-operate with the Government, all that the Government can do will be of little or of no avail. I am perfectly certain, that if Her Majesty's Government proposed, by the setting aside of a sum of money, to mitigate either scarcity or famine in Ireland, the House of Commons would grant it, if that were the only consideration, without a word

of dissent. But I advise you to take care that this prodigality of benevolence does not defeat itself. If you choose to say that you will, without any co-operation, without any local exertion whatever, undertake to feed the Irish people in this time of scarcity, all your efforts will be, and must be, useless. For, from that moment the proclamation has gone forth that no individual energy is asked for, that the aids of local authority are not necessary, but that Government will undertake the responsibility of feeding the people of Ireland, from that moment the Government alone will be relied on. But then you will fail: it is local exertion you must depend on. There ought to be in Ireland with the local proprietors an anxious co-operation, in place of an unfriendly disregard. There should be in every direction local committees formed, to give and to spread information, and to organize the means of seconding us in the object we have in view. I will venture to say, on the part of the clergy of all religious persuasions, that they will readily meet us and assist us. It is in vain to throw this task exclusively on the Government and on the House of Commons; without local aid and co-operation the work will not be effectually done. We have proposed various measures; we have, certainly, not advanced any suggestions of wholesale grants of money or of food, because it would be an utter demoralization of the people—creating an evil which it would be impossible to cure; it would teach habitual dependence, and looking to authority for that which is a moral duty for themselves to perform. And I say this not from placing too high a value on the mere pecuniary consideration, but because your benevolence, to be effectual, ought to be directed by caution and discretion. The aids suggested to be given to railroads cannot be of very great moment for this purpose. This distress is so wide-spread, and pervades so many parts of the country, that it would be a very doubtful and dangerous experiment to concentrate the population in the immediate neighbourhood of railroads. It is not well to make men leave their families, and to congregate together in one district, for the one object, and thus, as it were, depopulating other districts, to the total neglect of other occupations. It is a matter requiring great caution. I am disposed to think that by giving an assistance in extending smaller local works, we shall be doing that which is of far greater importance than is supposed. By what we have done with reference to the coasts of Ireland, we shall be laying the foundation for considerable after-prosperity, and for a great increase in the fisheries; and 2,000*l.* or 3,000*l.* laid out in this way may do more than by an advance of 200,000*l.* to some great line. But, considering the objects we have had in view, the manner in which the attention of Parliament has been directed to this subject, and the scarcity in Ireland, I must say I think it rather hard for an Irish Member who has taken no part in our deliberations to come at last, and declare that the Irish people scorn to take anything from English generosity, and to insinuate, in addition, that we have neglected our duty to his country. I think that had this distress occurred in any other part of the country, in Wales or in Scotland, there would not have been so unanimous a wish to afford that relief we are enabled to give—a feeling manifested amid all our many political variances; and instead of upbraiding us, if the hon. Gentleman would but address exhortations to his own countrymen, requesting their co-operation, depend upon it, he would do much more than he can hope to do by casting upon us these imputations.

Mr. J. O'CONNELL admitted that his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick had spoken warmly upon this subject; but they must remember that he had come from Ireland, where he had witnessed the distress of the people, and where he had found no practical effort yet made to mitigate it. [Sir J. Graham: Every application made from Ireland had been answered the very day it had been received.] The effect of that expenditure had not yet been made visible. The hon. Member for the county of Limerick had been taunted with being absent from his duties in that House. Those who uttered the taunt, ought to have known before they gave utterance to it, that if his hon. Friend were absent, it was not only with the knowledge and the consent, but with the full approval, of his constituents. His hon. Friend had been in that place where it was believed by his constituents his hon. Friend would best discharge his duty to his country. He had been present at these discussions, and was ready to give his testimony to the anxiety displayed by them in that House to relieve the distress in Ireland—that testimony he was bound to give, and he tendered it in the most unequivocal manner. His hon. Friend had spoken under a strong feeling, excited by the taunts of a paper against the

Irish; of a paper—the *Times*—which had aided in displacing the Whigs, and putting the present Government in office. His hon. Friend had suggested the imposition of an absentee tax. If ever there were a fair tax, that would be one; and if they proposed it, he was sure the Government would receive a considerable amount of support. At least it was worth their while to try what support they might get. If Government proposed it, they would have the support of the Irish Members—they would gain the warm sympathy of the people, for all honest men must desire to see a high tax imposed upon the heartless absentee landlords of Ireland. His hon. Friend had another cause for exasperation, though he had not spoken of it at the moment—that was the Coercion Bill which was coming down to them from the other House. That was an unconstitutional, exasperating, and unnecessary measure, and one too that would utterly nullify all the good effects that might have followed for any sympathy they had expressed for Irish distress. And he might add—that was a measure that would have the most disastrous effects upon the two countries. With regard to what was to be done at the present crisis, he would implore of the Government to let the people have food at once, whether they gave it as alms, or enabled them to purchase it by the efforts of their own industry. At this moment the people in many districts in Ireland were consuming the seed potatoes, so that there was not only the certainty of famine this season, but the prospect of it in the succeeding years. With this distress came the heavy burden of the poor rate, to be made still more heavy by the present measure, upon the occupying tenants; for in Ireland the landlords threw the burden of the poor rates upon the occupying tenants. As to stopping a portion of the rates from the landlord, he said he should like to see the condition of the unfortunate tenant who would dare to stop a single penny of poor rate from the rent of his landlord.

Mr. S. CRAWFORD wished to call the attention of the Government to the inconsistency which was now manifested in the working of the new Poor Law. The burden of enforcing the rate was thrown upon the Poor Law guardians; but no power was given to them of employing the people. In making this remark, he gave the Government and the House credit for their intentions towards the people of Ireland. He wished to see the land of Ireland made liable for the maintenance of the poor of that country, who, if they had the claim upon the land which the English people possessed, would not now be in such distress. With regard to the Bill under discussion, he desired strongly to impress upon the right hon. Baronet that there was a necessity to provide for other kinds of sickness than dysentery, and that provisions should be introduced into the measure for that purpose. The House should also adopt measures which would give a stimulus to private exertion in the improvement of the lands of Ireland; and that could not be done unless the tenantry had security for embarking their capital. He very much regretted that no measures had been yet brought in founded upon the Report of the Landlord and Tenant Commission. There were various important recommendations contained in that Report, and he would take the present opportunity of pressing upon the Government the necessity of considering the propriety of bringing in measures founded upon them.

The Earl of MARCH said, that though he disagreed from the general policy of Her Majesty's Ministers, he thought it incumbent to rise and state his opinions on the subject under discussion. The hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. S. O'Brien) had told them to-night, in the name of the people of Ireland, that he would not throw himself upon the generosity of that House. He entirely repudiated and repelled with indignation the very idea that hon. Members on that side at least were actuated by the feelings that they were "generous" towards Ireland in supporting the measures which had been introduced for the alleviation of distress in that country. On the contrary, they felt that they were doing nothing more than their duty. In the year 1822 a sum of, he believed, 250,000*l.* was voted by Parliament for the relief of Irish distress, whilst nearly an equal amount was raised in this country by private charity; and he now told the hon. Member for Limerick, in the name of the people of England, and in the name of those hon. Gentlemen who were sitting around him (the Earl of March), that if Her Majesty's Government were to come down to the House, and state that it was necessary for the relief of the people of Ireland that a sum of 100,000*l.*, or any other amount, should be voted, they and he would have no hesitation in giving it their support.

Mr. SHAW thought his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government had

misinterpreted the observations made by the hon. Member for Limerick, respecting Irish landlords. He understood his hon. Friend (Mr. O'Brien) not to complain of the resident landlords, but of the absentee proprietors. Moreover, it appeared to him that the right hon. Baronet had himself cast an imputation, very unmerited, on the resident landlords of Ireland—it was, that they were not ready to do their part in co-operating with the Government, to relieve the distress of the Irish people. Now, he (Mr. Shaw) insisted that there was no class more unjustly maligned than the resident landlords of Ireland. It was true that they were comparatively few in number, not generally as wealthy as the English proprietors, and placed under difficulties to which those in that country (England) were strangers; but he maintained that, as compared with their means, there was no body which, as a whole, did more to improve the condition of their tenantry and dependants, and to alleviate the distress of the poor that surrounded him. He admitted and deplored the great evil of Irish absenteeism. He saw great difficulties in an absentee tax; and he believed that neither tax nor any other remedy could cure the evil, until there was that security for life and property in Ireland, which unhappily was so much wanting at the present time. He willingly bore testimony to the universal sympathy for the scarcity and distress in Ireland, which had been evinced by that House; but he regarded it as most unfortunate that the question of Irish famine should have been unnecessarily mixed up with the political measures of the Government relating to the general commercial policy of the country. He did not mean, as others had said, that the Government had made the potato failure in Ireland a mere pretext for measures which had been previously determined on; but he certainly thought that the Government, having been at first misled, and, as it were, panic-stricken, by exaggerated statements of the extent of the disease, had put it forward as the foundation for those measures, and then found it difficult and inconvenient to abandon that ground. He was still of the same opinion that he had before expressed in that House, in respect of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, namely, that although there had been a failure to a considerable and lamentable extent, still that that failure had been exaggerated. He had visited Ireland since his former statement, and again consulted practical men, as well as the market prices throughout the country: he would admit too, that there had recently been an increase of the disease in the potato; but he still would maintain the general correctness of his former statement—that, while there was abundantly sufficient prospect of scarcity and distress in many parts of Ireland, to require every precaution that the Government could adopt, in order to alleviate them—yet, that upon the whole, in the greater part of Ireland, there was either an average stock of potatoes remaining, or a more than usual supply of other food as a substitute for them. He knew that it was unpopular to make those statements, but truth often was unpopular—it might appear at first sight unfeeling—Gentlemen at the other side might represent it as inhuman, in the present suffering condition of the Irish people; nevertheless, none of these considerations should deter him from stating, upon a question of so great importance what he sincerely believed to be the real facts of the case. In providing for the admitted scarcity, he agreed with his noble Friend the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), that it would have been much simpler and wiser for the Government to have purchased Irish oats, and other Irish food, where they were produced, than to have suffered them to be exported in such large quantities as they had lately been, and then to have had recourse to the round-about course of bringing maize from America. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) said, that would have had the effect of raising the price to the English artisans—but, surely, in point of general economy, it was obvious the expense of carriage and freight would, at all events, have been saved by purchasing Irish food on the spot where it was wanting: it would have been more congenial too to the taste of the Irish people; and as maize could be now introduced at a nominal duty only, the English artisans could as well have purchased it. With respect to the Bill proposed by the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham), he was apprehensive that it might add considerably to the burden of the Irish rate-payer, which was already sufficiently weighty; but he would not oppose that or any other measure which the Government, upon their responsibility, should introduce as a temporary expedient to meet the present temporary emergency in Ireland.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: The statement of the right hon. Gentleman made it desirable that some further and more par-

ticular accounts as to the distress in Ireland should be obtained. The right hon. Gentleman had, most honourably to himself, borne testimony a second time to the sympathy displayed by that House for the sufferings of that country; and that if there was any measure the House could adopt, or the Government could propose, which could tend to alleviate that distress, and to put the people in a better position to meet the evil, the House was ready to sanction such a measure. But there was great danger, in adopting measures which seemed at first view to be most calculated to relieve distress, that they might be productive of permanent misery. He remembered a large subscription having been entered into—more than 150,000*l.* he believed—upon occasion of great distress in the manufacturing districts; and upon after inquiry it had been found that great mischief had been done by the general granting of alms, without regard to the position of the recipents as regarded work; and he had been assured that many persons had become permanently impoverished and pauperised owing to the want of care with which the funds had been collected and distributed. He was inclined to attach very great importance to the opinions of Mr. Twisleton, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, and such other gentlemen as the Government had thought fit to consult upon the subject, with respect to the precise condition of the Irish population at the present moment, and in reference to the prospects that were probably opening before them; and he hoped that those opinions would before long be submitted to the consideration of the House. He was particularly desirous of knowing what reports Mr. Twisleton and those who were associated with him were prepared to make as to the extent of the distress prevailing and likely to prevail in Ireland, and as to the best method to be adopted for remedying it. He did not mistrust the measures which had been adopted by Government with a view to the relief of the Irish people. On the contrary, he believed that they were prudent, well-advised, and benevolent; but he thought it was exceedingly desirable that information should be had from time to time from persons so well qualified to form an opinion on the question as those who had been appointed by Government to inquire into the subject—information both as to the extent of the distress, and as to the effects produced by the remedial measures adopted by the Government as they came into operation. He confessed he was sorry to find that any delay, though it were ever so trifling, had taken place in carrying into effect the Acts which since the opening of the Session had been passed by that House for the benefit of Ireland. It was true that those measures had been but recently enacted; but the very necessity which had created the occasion for their immediate introduction rendered it imperative that as little delay as possible should occur in carrying them into operation. He fully concurred in everything that had been stated by the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury with respect to the necessity for local exertions by the affluent and wealthy, with a view to the relief of the people in the present scarcity; and he was of opinion, with the right hon. Baronet, that more was to be expected from such exertions than from the undertaking of railways or other public works. These great national enterprises, however, were not to be disregarded; on the contrary they ought to be taken in hand with the utmost zeal; and he trusted that the various district Committees that had been appointed throughout the country, and which were in communication with the Government, would see the necessity of using all possible expedition in adopting measures for commencing the works in their different localities. He also thought that it was in the highest degree desirable that such information as could with safety be relied on, should be submitted from time to time to the House, as to the manner in which the proprietors and landowners of the country were conducting themselves, and to what extent they manifested an inclination to co-operate with the Government. Such information would be satisfactory to that House, and its diffusion would be gratifying to the feelings of those amongst the landed proprietors who manifested a desire to discharge their duty in an exemplary manner, at the same time that it would operate as a stimulus to others who were tardy and reluctant.

SIR R. PEEL remarked that the observations which had fallen from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin appeared to imply a charge against the Government, that they had exaggerated the amount of distress prevailing, and likely to prevail, in Ireland. Now, all he had to say to this was, to express a hope that hon. Members at all sides of that House would suspend their judgment until Monday next, when

certain Papers which he then held in his hand, and which had been received yesterday, would be printed, and accessible to all. It would be then seen whether Her Majesty's Government had or had not exaggerated the true state of affairs in Ireland.

Lord CLAUDE HAMILTON rose to make some observations with reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Limerick. He concurred in what had been stated by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government with respect to the duty which devolved upon Irish landlords of making local exertions with a view to alleviating the distress which was impending over the Irish population. He represented a county which possessed the advantage of a resident proprietary, and he had not the slightest doubt but that the landlords in that county, and indeed in Ireland generally, would discharge their duty in a becoming manner, and act up to the advice given by the First Lord of the Treasury. He must vindicate the Irish landlords from the aspersions cast upon them by the hon. Member for Limerick—taunts which came with a peculiar bad grace from such a quarter. The hon. Member had to-night, for the first time this Session, made his appearance in the House. He had neglected his own duties, both as a landlord and a representative, and had devoted his undivided time and attention to the task of fostering a system of agitation most pernicious to the best interests of his country. And yet the hon. Member now came over here to cast censure on the landlords of Ireland; whereas the real state of the case was this, that if all the Irish landlords were like himself, all the legislatures in the world could not save Ireland from utter ruin. The hon. Member feigned a great anxiety about the Irish people; but he was acting a part hostile to their interests, by lending himself to that baneful system of agitation by which Ireland was convulsed, and prosperity rendered unattainable to her population.

Mr. SHAW, in explanation: The right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) has misrepresented what I said. I did not accuse the Government of wilful exaggeration. I did not even accuse those who misled the Government of wilful exaggeration; but I said, what I am ready to maintain, that the statements as to the potato failure in Ireland were in fact exaggerated; and I am persuaded that the Papers to be produced by the right hon. Baronet will not change my opinion in that respect.

Sir R. PEEL: The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw) said that we were deceived originally, and that we had not afterwards the manliness to acknowledge our error, but wilfully persevered in it.

Mr. SHAW: I did not say that either. What I did say was, that the Government having been originally misled, had founded their great measure upon what I believed to be a false ground, and that it was afterwards difficult to abandon it.

Mr. BERNAL believed that the present condition of the Irish population was in the last degree alarming and distressing, and such as to command the warmest sympathy of that House; and this being his feeling, he had heard with extreme sorrow what his right hon. and learned Friend opposite (Mr. Shaw) had said respecting reports being exaggerated. He did not require to wait until Monday next, as had been suggested by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, before he made up his mind with respect to the actual condition of Ireland, for he could not bring himself to believe that any Government would be so imprudent, so indiscreet, or so malevolently wicked, as, for the sake of carrying any party or political object, to play with such a topic as the distress of millions of human beings—distress, too, which verged upon the point of starvation, pestilence, and death. He implored of his right hon. and learned Friend to approach the consideration of this question dispassionately, and, throwing aside all party bias, to ask himself calmly and deliberately this question, whether, from his own knowledge of the character of Her Majesty's Ministers, he thought it likely that any of them would be so silly and so wicked as to mingle, for a petty party purpose, truth and falsehood indiscriminately in the discussion of a topic of such awful importance as the condition of our fellow subjects in Ireland. If ever there was a crisis which demanded prompt and vigorous exertion on the part of the Legislature, the present was that crisis, for the lives of thousands upon thousands were at stake. This was no time to quibble about politico-economic objections. The right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary had announced that he had learned from the reports of persons who were appointed to investigate the condition of the Irish people, that famine and typhus fever were rapidly approaching. This being the awful state of affairs, was the House of Commons to stand still waiting for the dilatory proceedings of railway companies, com-

missioners, and boards of works? It was all very fine to talk of teaching the Irish people to depend on themselves, and to buy oats and barley for their own use. Where were they to get money to purchase food? A vast proportion of the Irish population had no money in their pockets to buy either such provision as was indigenous to the soil, or such as might be imported. What arrant nonsense it was, then, to bid them buy food! Were they to be starved to death pending the arrival of the period when riches would come upon them? Extraordinary cases must have extraordinary remedies. Let the nostrums of political economists be flung aside. If famine and disease were approaching, these evils should be met in time, and, if possible, averted. Were the people to starve and rot in pestilential lazars? Certainly not. He was anxious to know whether the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department would be able to explain, by means of the Reports which he intended to lay upon the Table, the reasons why there was not a more accelerated progress made in carrying into effect the measures which had already been passed in that House to facilitate the employment of the Irish people in public work? [Sir James Graham observed that the Bills in question had not received the Royal Assent until within the last few days.] The question then was, what were the Irish poor to do in the interval? They were told that it was useless to depend on the landlords. In what a dilemma were the sufferers placed? For his own part, he would declare that there was no proposition, whether conformable or irreconcilable with the principles of political economy, which he would not support, if its tendency were to secure the welfare and the salvation of the Irish people.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER did not wish to detain the House by any lengthened remarks upon the subject, with respect to which general unanimity appeared to prevail; but as the hon. Member who had just sat down appeared to be under the impression that some unnecessary delay had taken place in carrying into effect the measures which had been lately passed by that House for promoting public works in Ireland, he felt himself called upon to say a single word in explanation. The Bill under which authority was given for increased grants had only been passed a few days ago, and no delay which was at all avoidable had taken place. Three days since authority had been given to the Board of Works in Ireland to undertake important public works in the county of Clare and the county of Meath, these being the districts of the country in which the distress appeared to be most oppressing; and if any delay h taken place it had unavoidably resua from the necessity of ascertaining what description of works it was most desirable should be undertaken.

Mr. POULETT SCROPE observed that there was no measure which the Government could adopt with a view to relieve the distress and difficulty in which the Irish people were now placed which would not command his warmest and most cordial support. A noble Lord opposite had censured the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien) because of his taking part in the repeal agitation; but if anything could justify an Irishman or an Englishman in advocating the repeal of the Legislative Union between the countries, it was the contemplation of this fact, from year to year, that the Irish people were not treated as the English people were by that House. He put it to the conscience of the Members of that House to say whether they had dealt with the people of Ireland as they had dealt with the English people. In England the peasantry had the first claim on the produce of the land, and justly so, because their labour went in a great degree to create it; but in Ireland, where the agricultural produce was created by the toil of the agricultural classes in a much greater degree even than in England (for in England the soil was more indebted to the expenditure of capital than in Ireland), the population were treated with no such respect or consideration. In England the claim of the agricultural classes to food was—so to speak—the first charge upon the soil. No man could starve in England as long as means for his support were to be found in his parish. Before the landlord could touch one penny of rent for his estate, especial care was taken that the poor man should not be reduced to starvation. But this unhappily was not the case in Ireland. In Ireland there were many considerations which intervened between the poor man's claim and the produce of the land; and as long as this was so, how could they censure the Irish people for being discontented, and for complaining that the same measure of justice was not granted to them which was awarded to the people of England? The right hon. Baro-

net the Secretary of State for the Home Department had intimated his intention of introducing a Bill, one of the provisions of which was to give to boards of guardians additional power to grant relief; but this additional relief was only to be granted to such of the population as had been prostrated by disease, and were actually stretched upon the fever-bed. It occurred to him that a much wiser and more humane proceeding would be to adopt some measures to prevent the population from being reduced to such a dreadful condition. It was an essential condition to the right of enjoying the relief which was to be in the gift of the boards of guardians, that the applicants should be prostrated by disease; but this he considered an impolitic, cruel, and most unwise economy. In England the mere fact of a man being in a state of destitution was sufficient to entitle him to relief. Why should it not be so in Ireland as well? Why should illness be added as a necessary condition? If any person came before a board of guardians who was supposed to be an impostor, let them apply the same test to him in Ireland as was applied in England. Let them put him to hard work, and they would soon find out whether he was an impostor or not; or they might apply the further test of outdoor employment on public works. Let them apply both or either of these tests, if necessary; but let them not refuse the poor man in Ireland the food that was necessary to keep him in health until he was suffering from fever, and then take him in as a fever patient. It was proposed that an absentee tax, or a property tax, should be established; but in his mind the best tax to be applied for the purpose was an ordinary poor rate. If the landlord found that he must maintain the people on his property if they could not maintain themselves, he would come to look after his property. The means of bringing the absentees back was to make them responsible for the due safety of the people on their estates; and, inasmuch as that would be a tax on the rental of Ireland, it would be the best property tax that could be applied for the purpose. He conceived that the poor rate should be applied for the support of the destitute out of the workhouse when the workhouse was not capable of affording them accommodation. The proposition of the hon. Member for Finsbury coincided with that which he attempted to urge upon the House, namely, that the poor rate should be applied in the first instance for the relief of this extreme destitution. It had been said by the right hon. Baronet, "let the landlords do their duty;" and he was one of those who said it was the duty of the landlords of Ireland to provide for the poor. He repeated the maxim, "that property has its duties as well as its rights," and he felt it was the duty of landlords to see that the people on their estates did not starve. He was not one of those who wished to impeach the humanity or generosity of the landlords of Ireland. He did not wish to say anything against them as a body; but he defied any one to deny that the landlords of Ireland, however they might do their duty as a body, individually did not do their duty. He repeated, that he thought the property rateable for the relief of the poor should first be made subject for the support of the poor; and if the destitution became so great that contributions were necessarily required from individuals and from the Government, he should not, in a great emergency, object to it. He asked what was the amount of the poor rate at present made in Ireland? He doubted very much if it reached twopence in the pound—he was sure it did not reach threepence; but in England the poor rate, on an average, was from two to three shillings in the pound; and until something more than twopence in the pound was contributed towards the relief of the poor by the property of Ireland, why should it be said that the property of Ireland was overburdened by the very natural and just responsibility that was imposed upon it?

Mr. BANKES said, it appeared to him that there was now forced upon the attention of the House that which must have occurred to the minds of many people, namely, when the Government was in possession of that important information with reference to Ireland, and when they had it in the month of October last, surely it was their bounden duty to call together the Parliament in the month of November, by which course of proceeding those difficulties of which they now complained would not have occurred. Those votes of public money would then have been taken, and long before this time that money would have been transmitted to Ireland, and those beneficial measures which were contemplated would be now in operation. Instead of now discussing the consequences of the want of food in that country, namely, the

fever which had arisen amongst the people, caused by their privations, they might have the hope of preventing, instead of curing, those mischiefs which now called for their attention. He was at a loss to know what answer the Government had to give to the observation which so naturally arose on this subject. They were in possession of that full information which did produce considerable uneasiness and disquiet in their minds; and surely the natural course to have been taken with reference to Bills to furnish employment to the people of Ireland was to call together the Parliament at the earliest possible period. If they did so, the money would now be circulating in that country, and the people would not now be in the state which was represented. As he (Mr. Bankes) had risen to make this observation, he would say, that having heard the speech of his right hon. Friend the Recorder of Dublin, he must say, that in his humble opinion the comments made in that speech were most unfairly made. He did not hear his right hon. Friend make any statement stronger than this, that having been last week in Ireland, he felt it a relief to his mind to be able to say, that he thought the extreme accounts of distress had been exaggerated; but that he did find the distress to be great, and, in fact, greater than was usual at this period of the year. He (Mr. Bankes) thought there was nothing in that statement which should cause an imputation to be cast on the benevolence of his feelings, when he declared it was a relief to his mind to be enabled with truth to make such a statement. With reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Finsbury, which gave rise to this discussion, he (Mr. Bankes) must say it had his cordial concurrence. He agreed in the hon. Member's observations. He coincided not only in the tone—and everything that fell from him was always in the tone of humanity—but in the spirit of his observations. He must say that the hon. Member's speech had been much misrepresented. The hon. Member did not say that the suggestion he offered was to be considered as one of a permanent nature. The hon. Member merely proposed that it should be of a temporary nature, with a view to afford the most efficacious remedy for the evils which were now prevalent. The hon. Member said, instead of physic, try what food will do. He concurred in that suggestion, and he trusted the Government would give it their attention.

Sir VALENTINE BLAKE agreed with the hon. Member who spoke last, that food was the thing required in Ireland. He suggested the improvement of waste lands in Ireland by the Government, and declared it to be his opinion that the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. S. O'Brien) had been hardly dealt with.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN begged to be permitted to say a few words, but he was not going to reply to the personalities of the noble Lord the Member for Tyrone. He could not think of taking up the time of the House by observations of such a nature; but he would say, with reference to the expenditure of money in Ireland, to which the noble Lord had alluded, that the people who subscribed that money were the best judges how it should be employed. He wished that what he had said should be distinctly understood. He confessed that his feelings, in common with a large number of his fellow countrymen, had been greatly exasperated by the tone—not so much taken in that House as by the press of England—with respect to those miserable grants. But the fact was, that Parliament had only granted them 100,000*l.*, for all the rest were loans; and he, on the part of the people of Ireland, so far as one individual could speak in their name, said, let them pass a law to give them the four or five millions which were now drawn by absentees out of their country, and they would give them back their 100,000*l.* He considered it to be the duty of Parliament to give them good laws, that would bring the industry of the country into operation; and if Parliament met in the month of November to enact good laws, instead of now coming forward with a Coercion Bill, they would not be under the necessity of making those painful appeals to Parliament.

Mr. W. MILES said, if the hon. Member for Limerick had been in his place during the late discussions, he would have found that every Member on both sides of the House had been ready to come forward in every possible way to assist the Government in providing for the distress of the people of Ireland. All the information the Government had on the subject had been brought forward, and Government had received the ready assent of the House in moving to take off the duty on maize and all food necessary for the people of Ireland. Moreover, he would tell the hon. Member that, if instead of 100,000*l.*, the Government had thought it necessary to ask for a

vote of ten times that sum, he was certain the British House of Commons would have readily assented to it to relieve the distress of the population of Ireland. But the measures which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. S. O'Brien) proposed, were the very worst that could be devised to meet the exigency; for months must be spent in their discussion, during which time hundreds and thousands of the Irish people might perish of disease and famine. What was to be done should be done immediately. Sanatory establishments for diseased persons should be established in all parts of Ireland, more particularly in those districts where the disease was already prevalent; and not only this remedy, but all remedies should be brought at once into operation. It would be necessary, also, that they should be assisted in these efforts by the local board and the Irish clergy and priests; for without their aid the Government could do little or nothing to stave off the famine which was about to reach the Irish people. Before he sat down he wished to ask what had become of a Return he moved for about the first day of the Session? He then moved for a Return of the highest price of potatoes in the different market towns in Ireland on the 1st of February, for each of the last seven years. He thought great advantage would result from the production of these Papers. It must meet the observation of every Gentleman that the people of Ireland were starving in the midst of plenty. Only look at the imports from Ireland into this country. He thought this was the most lamentable position of the people of Ireland, that they should export so much, and yet be starving. It was a most anomalous position. It was only by these Papers that they could see the extent of misery which prevailed in Ireland, and the necessity for measures to render it of less frequent recurrence. He wished to know also the capacity of the different Poor Law houses now existing in Ireland, and the number of their inmates. As he understood they were about to establish new poorhouses there, he thought it well that they should first know the extent of the present accommodation, and whether some of the existing houses could not be advantageously appropriated for the purpose.

Sir J. GRAHAM begged to call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the Votes of the 9th March. On that day he would find the Return he moved for respecting potatoes was presented, and ordered to be printed. He would also find a statement appended to that Return, to which he would take the opportunity of calling the hon. Member's attention—namely, that it afforded no safe criterion for the future, inasmuch as it was stated, that from the progress of the disease many of the crops would be utterly destroyed in the course of the month following. With respect to the number of workhouses, he had no objection to a Return, if it were wished for; but he must observe, it would be altogether useless. The hon. Member must see, that as the inmates of the present workhouses were not affected with disease, there would be the greatest danger in introducing amongst them persons who were suffering from it, and that, consequently, it would be necessary to erect others for the purpose. The hon. Gentleman had misunderstood the object of the measure, which was not to throw the expense of providing these hospitals on the British public, but upon the poor rate in Ireland.

Mr. R. A. FITZGERALD observed that if his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick had expressed himself strongly, every allowance must be made for his feelings. If that Parliament sat in Dublin, and English Members came over there to press on the Legislature the distress of their country, he should hope, for the honour of humanity, that they would express themselves in terms not less forcible. As an Irish Member, he, for one, begged to thank his hon. Friend for his speech; and to say that he believed him entitled to the heartfelt gratitude of his countrymen for the course which he was taking, both in the House and out of it. He had heard it said that the distress of the Irish people was exaggerated. For his own part, he believed no language could adequately describe it; and he knew for a fact, that, in his own county of Waterford, there were 40,000 people with little or nothing to support them.

Mr. VILLIERS said, one observation which fell from the hon. Member for Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) seemed to him so remarkable that he would ask the attention of the House to it. The hon. Member said, that it was a distressing thing that, while there was so much distress among the people of Ireland, we should be importing their produce. Now, he would just suggest to the hon. Member a mode of correcting this evil. Let them get that produce elsewhere. But it was the business of the hon. Member's life to prevent

this. He believed the price was not higher here than in Ireland. Then let their produce remain there, and let the Irish people consume their own produce. Then the hon. Gentleman said another thing. In his benevolence towards the people of Ireland, he would restrict the commerce of the country, forgetting that without the employment it afforded, the people would have still less money in their pockets to buy food. Let the hon. Member inquire into the matter, and he would find that whenever there was distress in the manufacturing districts the Irish people were more distressed than at other periods. Let the hon. Member reflect that there were 600,000 Irish people in this country who were dependent upon the prosperity of our manufactures, and that it was that prosperity which enabled them to put money into their pockets when they returned to Ireland. He had heard two hon. Members (the hon. Members for Limerick and Stroud) advocate the repeal of the Union. They offered two reasons in support of that measure. The hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope) said he did not wonder the gentlemen of Ireland were for repeal, when he considered how different was the condition of the people of Ireland to that of the people of England. His hon. Friend entered into a lengthened detail of his views on the subject; but he asked him whether it might not all be summed up in this, that he thought it necessary to have a poor law in Ireland? But he would ask his hon. Friend, if they were to repeal the Union, and there was a Parliament sitting in Dublin, and legislating for Ireland, whether he believed the first measure they would adopt would be a law taxing themselves for the support of the poor? He believed that if they were to have the advantage of an efficient Poor Law in Ireland, they must be indebted for it to the Legislature of England. There was another great evil they had heard of as the second reason, and that was the absence of landed proprietors from Ireland. Now that was really not the fault of the Legislature of England. But he would ask his hon. Friends from that country if they did not find some estates there of non-resident landlords better managed than those of residents, and that it was not a condition of residence that the poor should be taken poor of, and estates be well managed? For himself he thought there was no necessary connexion between these matters.

MR. SCROPE explained that he did not advocate the repeal of the Union. He merely said that if he were an Irishman, and saw the interests of Ireland were not regarded by the Imperial Legislature, he should advocate that mode of obtaining justice for his countrymen.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, it appeared to him that the ideas of the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) were so concentrated on the one object of free trade, that he could not see any circumstances which might render its adoption more or less advantageous at one time than another. The argument of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was, in his opinion, a perfect fallacy.

MR. FINCH said, if all the Irish corn were to be driven out of the English market, he did not see how the people of Ireland would be benefited by the prosperity of English manufactures. The great cause of Irish suffering was the want of a demand for labour; and the greatest curse that could be inflicted upon Ireland would be the introduction of the produce of Polish or Russian labour. In his opinion Her Majesty's Government had taken the fittest course in the measure before the House to remedy the existing evil; and though he differed with them upon other points, he considered that they deserved the thanks of the country for their prompt exertions to put an end to famine and disease.

Leave given to bring in the Bill.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

The Report on the Customs and Corn Importation Resolutions was brought up. On the Question that they be read a Second Time,

MR. SPOONER thereupon rose to move that the Resolutions be read a second time that day six months. He felt bound to make this Motion, because he considered they were about striking a fatal blow at the prosperity of this country, and to put at hazard the national credit, by the removal of protection to British industry—that system under which commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, had attained their present state of greatness and renown. It was under that principle of protection to native industry, that they had been able to compete successfully with foreign countries; under that system had grown up their ships, their Colonies, and their commerce, which had excited even the envy and admiration of Napoleon Bonaparte,

who declared he would give half of his empire for them. He thought that by abandoning that principle they would be in serious danger of losing these advantages. What grounds had been urged for abandoning this principle? They had been told that experience had proved that those articles from which protection had been removed, had increased in price; in fact, that by the removal of protection, the price of the article had universally increased. [Sir R. PEEL: The price universally increased! I did not say so.] He regretted if he had misrepresented the right hon. Baronet; but he certainly understood the right hon. Baronet to argue from the fact, that the price of cattle had risen under the provisions of the late Tariff —that the diminished protection had proved a benefit rather than an injury to the interests for which protection had been taken. He thought that the argument of the right hon. Baronet had been already fully answered. It was proved, beyond a doubt, that the price which butchers' meat had maintained, had arisen from causes very different from the removal of protection. He would not weary the House by details upon the subject; but he might just briefly state, that, owing to disease and a dry season, graziers were obliged to send their cattle to market before they were fat—they had no food for them: added to this, a panic had seized the graziers on account of the Government measure—a low price was the natural consequence of these things at the time, and a short supply in subsequent years, which short supply naturally increased the price. He would not go at length into a refutation of all the arguments that had been advanced by the right hon. Baronet, showing how the removal of protection had favourably influenced trade and manufactures; but he would just mention one department of manufactures, which came under his own immediate knowledge —the glove trade—for he resided in the neighbourhood of the largest glove manufactories in England. This experiment was the first tried in free trade; and the effect of this experiment was, that out of 100 manufactories existing at that time in Worcester, there were only forty now remaining; and by the last census, there were 800 houses vacant in that city. He knew a number of glove manufacturers, who were maintaining their families in comfort, contributing their shares towards the public burdens and to an increase of the wealth of the country, who were thrown out of employment, and driven into indigence for the remainder of their days, by the removal of protection. What became of the poor operatives who had been brought up to this trade, and could do nothing else? Their labour was their capital—their skill had been rendered valueless—they were thrown out of employment, could work at none other, they became a burden upon society, and were reduced to the utmost destitution. The noble Lord the Member for the city of London, had, in his work on the Constitution, shown the fallacy of the argument, that when one employment fails, another can be taken up; he stated that it could not be done—the blacksmith could not become a silk weaver; he showed that it was not safe to be guided by general principles, but that they should look to practical effects, and take care how they meddled with trade. Not only in Worcester, but in Hereford and the adjoining neighbourhood the glove trade was extensively carried on; but in many of the latter districts there was not now a vestige of it. Was it not mere clap-trap, therefore, to talk of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest markets? They bought cheapest in the French markets, in this instance, and they paid very dearly for it, indeed, for they ruined a very important branch of their own manufactures. Cheapness did not always consist in the small quantity of money paid for an article; for although at a low price, the article was often too dearly bought, when at the expense of their own trade: to the money paid must be added the cost of the destruction of capital, and the ruin of the individuals whose skill, whose capital, and whose labour was involved in the issue. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn had shown so clearly and so ably the evils which the removal of protection had caused in the silk trade, that he felt it unnecessary to enter upon it. No one could have listened to the unanswered and unanswerable speech of that noble Lord, without being convinced of the evil which resulted from what was called buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. The arguments of the noble Lord had not been answered—they were irrefragable. It was a vain anticipation for hon. Members to expect that any measures under the present monetary system, would ensure continued prosperity to trade and manufactures. Every year showed that some branch of industry was in great distress and depression. Manufactures suf-

fered one year — then agriculture; they probably both revived in another year; and then it was imagined that the country was in a prosperous state. But it was all a false prosperity. After the termination of the war in 1815, very general and extreme distress ensued. Of course, causes for this were sought. First, they blamed the change from war to peace; but the evil remained so long that practical men began at length to see that it could not be attributable to that cause, and they were forced to find out another. It was next attributed to over-abundant harvests; the bounties of Providence were blamed as the cause of national suffering. Then followed the time of wet seasons, and the distress was ascribed this time, with too much truth, to the bad weather; but that temporary evil passed away, and still the nation suffered; and then they were driven to search for some other cause. It was next attributed to our having too many people; and emigration was proposed as the remedy. We were to ship off our surplus population. But of what did that surplus consist? Not the drones of society. They would have been of no more use abroad than they were at home. No; it was the industrious, the skilful, and the small-capital men of the country that were to be exported; and to show how little of real knowledge, or of sound judgment, were brought to bear on the subject, he would mention the singular fact, that at the time to which he alluded, two Committees were sitting upstairs, who carried on their deliberations next door to each other, the one for the purpose of preventing more corn from coming into the country, and the other to send away the mouths. Too many loaves, and too many men—such was the singular paradox which these Committees attempted to meet. Such were the remedies which, from time to time, had been adopted for these ever-recurring evils. Now, what was the master evil—what was the cause of all their distress—the cause which was even now in operation, and which would certainly not be removed by the propositions that were now before the House? He did not know whether he dared to mention it; but he would throw himself upon the kind indulgence of the House. He never had in that House at any length entered into consideration upon the subject, and he would entreat them to hear him, while he briefly explained what he really thought was the cause of all their distresses, and, having done that, he would leave it. The monster evil was the Currency Bill of 1819. [*Laughter, and cries of* "Hear, hear!"] He knew that it was his misfortune, and a deep and a heavy misfortune he felt it to be, to differ from a large majority of the House; but he would not shrink from stating his opinions in opposition to theirs; for, as long as he held a seat in that House, he felt it to be his duty to declare his opinion. He, therefore, would not shrink from stating as his opinion, that to the Bill of 1819 was to be attributed all those alternations of false prosperity, and consequent reactions of adversity, they had been struggling with. Ever since the Bill of 1819, remedies had been applied to the ever-recurring evils, and applied in vain. They had refused to inquire into the real cause of these evils, and till they did so, they never would find a remedy: and he warned his right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) that his present propositions would prove as complete a failure as any of the remedies that had been formerly proposed. They might say Committees had been appointed. But how had those Committees conducted their inquiries? Would it be believed, that on the first inquiry, which was instituted in the House of Lords, the following incident occurred between a noble Lord and a director of the Bank of England. The director was throwing out a hint that it might be a dangerous step to adopt the course then proposed of returning to a gold payment. He was met by Lord Grenville in this curious way. His Lordship said—

> "Sir, we sent for you not to tell us of the consequences of returning to a gold standard—not to give an opinion as to the propriety of the attempt; but we sent for you to ascertain the best way of carrying out this object — an object which we have already resolved upon."

That remark at once shut the mouths of practical men; and those who saw the dangers which were coming were prevented from laying before the country their opinions on this essential point. In order to a real inquiry into the merits of this subject, they must call before them practical men, not pseudo-philosophers—men who bigotedly adhered to abstract principles, without regard to the obstacles that lay in the way of reducing them to practice. He would illustrate his meaning by an idea that just occurred to him. Suppose a man were in a wood on a fine starlight night; he did not know his way out, except generally that his way lay towards the north. He fixed his eye, therefore,

upon the polar star, and proceeded confidently onwards, but before going far he came to a deep river over which he could not pass, and thus in spite of himself he was obliged to turn back to the south. That, he thought, was an exact illustration of the value of abstract principles without regard to practical difficulties. Yet this was the course now adopted. They were all for free trade, never minding the difficulties into which these principles and a circulation based on bullion would throw the country; not caring for the destruction of capital, manufactures, and trade: they had resolved to go back to the ancient standard of value, caring nothing for the consequences that ensued, showing that without hesitation they would destroy a nation rather than abandon what they called a principle. He called upon the House not to expect any good from the plans that were now proposed, for he believed they would produce a great and severe aggravation of the evil. He hoped they would rather follow the advice of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who once thought as he now did. It was that right hon. Baronet who taught him on this great subject; and though he might now think proper to dispense with his former speeches and publication, he could not get rid of the impression those speeches and that publication had made upon him. He was the admiring pupil of the hon. Baronet of Netherby. He could not be an unconvinced follower of the right hon. the Secretary of State. But it might be said, what was wrong in the Bill of 1819? He would tell them in a few words. They commenced the war with a debt of 300,000,000*l.*, and with a trifling depreciation in the currency. They went on, and during the war the debt increased to 800,000,000*l.*, and they had created a depreciation in the currency of more than 33 per cent. What did they do at the end of the war? They resolved at once to go back to the ancient standard of value. They said the public faith required it, and that they had always intended to go back to that ancient standard. But how could hon. Gentlemen hold that opinion when they recollected what took place in 1810 and 1811? In the first of these years, after a debate of five nights, and in the second year, after a debate of six or seven nights, they came to this memorable conclusion—and he was not sure but his right hon. Friend the present First Lord of the Treasury himself had voted for the proposition—that there was no depreciation in the currency—that there was no departure from the standard value—that a 1*l.* note and a shilling were for all legal purposes of equal value with a golden guinea; and yet after this, in 1819, they called upon the country to recognise the depreciation which before they denied to exist. They said that justice required them to return to a point which they formerly declared they had never left, and to find a remedy for an evil which they before declared had no existence. But it ought to be remembered that country gentlemen and others confiding in the Resolution of the House in 1810, had made settlements for their younger children—had entered into mortgages and agreements, having no fear of the country returning to the ancient standard of value, because this House had declared that they had never moved from it. They expected, therefore, that the charges they had made, and the burdens they had consented to, would remain in force to be measured in the currency in which they had been incurred. But these persons were at once turned round upon by the House, who said to them, we must return to the ancient standard of value. But they were not even content with that—they did more than return to the ancient standard of value. The ancient standard consisted of gold and silver jointly, with precautions against melting and exportation. He knew that those precautions were evaded; but he knew that the evasion took place at considerable risk; but now they had altogether thrown the trade of exportation open, and removed the moral checks which formerly existed; and the effect of the present measure would be to aggravate the evil, as the bullion would more than ever be exported for corn. He knew this was denied on the other side, as it was argued that foreigners would take our manufactures in exchange; but he thought such results would not ensue. Foreigners bringing their corn to this country would have the option of taking the taxed manufactures of this country in exchange; or they had another option, and that they would make use of, of going to the Bank of England for gold, and then carrying that gold away and buying with it the untaxed manufactures of other countries. That was the process which would go on; and he warned his right hon. Friend, that many and great as were the difficulties which pressed upon him now, he would have this one added,

that the gold would go out of the country which ought to be spent in the wages of labour at home; causing a want of food on the one hand, and on the other a want of the means of paying the wages of labour. With reference to the subject in hand, he begged to say, that he agreed with his hon. Friends near him on this important point—that protection to native industry was essential to the prosperity of all classes in the country. He would say more—that it was essential to the maintenance of the public credit—essential to the safety of the Crown—essential to the well-being of the community. On what principle could they defend the introduction of foreign labour to compete with home labour, unless the two were placed on equal terms? He believed they were all agreed in this, that taxation fell ultimately upon labour; and therefore he claimed protection, not for any class, but he claimed it for the British labourer; for as he bore a large share of the taxation of this country, no foreigner ought to be permitted to compete with him, unless he contributed the same share to the taxation and the local burdens of the country. That principle this country had always maintained, and it was by the maintenance of that principle that she had risen to such a high station—that she had been enabled to establish her ships, Colonies, and commerce. He wished to preserve them. It was essential to maintain the principle of protection, if this kingdom were to be, as she had ever been, the mistress of the seas, the envy and admiration of the world. He hailed the passing of the Canadian Corn Bill, for he thought there ought to be free trade with all our Colonies. They ought to be treated, as what, in fact, they were, parts of the British Empire: like counties, as much an integral portion of the kingdom as Dorsetshire and Hampshire. They had adopted that principle with respect to Canada; but what were they now doing? They were about to take the cup which they had raised to the lips of the Canadians, and to dash it to the ground. Canada was preparing for the new corn trade—she had built mills—she had sown a greater breadth of land; but now the corn to compete with the produce of this country would come, not from the Canadians, who would take our manufactures in return, but from countries on the Continent, who would take our gold in return. In illustration of this, he stated that he met, two days ago, a gentleman in a railway carriage near Coventry, who told him that several large orders for watches from Canada had already been countermanded, because the Canadians saw that the necessary effect of the proposed measures would be to stop the importation of corn from Canada. He (Mr. Spooner) thought it right to say, that while he agreed with his hon. Friends near him on the principle of protection, he differed from them on the question of the sliding-scale, which he thought militated against the only principle on which protection could be claimed. Protection was claimed and given on this principle, that whatever articles came into this country must bear an equal share of taxation with corresponding productions of this country. Now, that was not the principle of the sliding-scale. The duty was not laid according to the taxation bearing on the home produce, but according to the price which the home produce brought in the market. He believed that the sliding-scale aggravated the evils of the monetary system, because under it corn was kept up till it reached its highest average, and then a great glut was suddenly let in upon the market. He thought the sliding-scale bad in principle, and it had been proved to be bad in practice; but much as he preferred a fixed duty, even that, under the present system of currency, would be totally inefficacious. These, he begged to state, were no new doctrines of his own. They were opinions which had been published in the year 1826 by his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary; and he would assure his right hon. Friend that nothing would remove from his mind the impression his writings had produced; and he would tell his right hon. Friend now, that he did not believe he would rise and say he had altered his mind. The hon. Gentleman then proceeded to quote the following passages from Sir James Graham's work on *Corn and Currency:*—

"It is impossible to establish a fixed protecting duty with fairness, when the standard of value is itself unfair. This appears to me," said the right hon. Baronet, addressing the landowners, "the very core of the whole subject—the point on which you have committed the most fatal errors. You have fought for high prices, and concurred in measures which render them impossible. You have retained your monopoly, but consented to a change in the value of money, which must destroy its efficacy. The ground which you still endeavour to defend is no longer tenable; and the points which you surrendered, ensure your defeat. If I might venture to allude to the conduct of the landed interest in this last Session of Parliament, I should say, that it affords conclusive evidence of the blindest adherence to the single object of high prices, coupled with an entire misapprehension of the means

by which this object might be attained, and of the general principles on which prices must depend. The price of commodities, and of corn amongst the rest, is compounded of two ingredients—of the supply in the market compared with the demand, and also of the value of money; itself the measure of value, liable, however, to great variation, in proportion to its quantity."

He found also that the right hon. Baronet, in speaking of the compact which he affirmed to have been made between the landlords and those who concerted and maintained the monetary measures introduced in 1819, thus expresses himself:—

"For it is well known, that in this last Session (1825) they bargained with the King's Ministers to support the further contraction of the currency, on condition that the Government did not destroy their monopoly by a repeal of the Corn Laws."

And then further, the right hon. Baronet remarked—

"So far from urging the Government to bring separately under the view of the Legislature the questions of currency and corn, it was the decided interest of the landowners to have insisted on a careful revision of both these subjects conjointly. They are in themselves intimately blended; it is absurd to talk of price without reference to money; and it is impossible to alter the quantity of money without affecting prices. Disjointed discussion on these two vital points is the precise cause of the dangerous conclusions now sanctioned by Parliament, which threaten with ruin and degradation the whole class of existing proprietors."

Now, he would appeal to his right hon. Friend, whether he still held those opinions. If his right hon. Friend did not, he hoped, before this debate was brought to a close, his right hon. Friend would give the House some clear and substantial reasons for his change of opinion; and if his right hon. Friend did so, he would not say that he would not be converted, but he would not surrender his opinions while unconverted, and he must continue to hold his present views. Much had been said of the danger that had pressed upon them a few years ago, when they had a bad trade and high provisions. No one could be more sensible of that danger than he was, living at the time in a manufacturing district, and being an active magistrate in the neighbourhood; but he could tell the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government that the high prices of provisions did not cause the bad state of trade. No, the bad trade arose from circumstances which could be easily explained in Committee, or, in that House, if he were not afraid of trespassing upon their indulgence. But if they would give him a Committee to investigate these matters, he would show that that distress had been occasioned by circumstances which would again occur—which had compelled the Bank of England to withdraw the circulating medium to force prices down to the level of the Continent, in order to retain gold in this country. Hence the misery, the discontent, which they all so deeply deplored; and he warned the right hon. Baronet that at no distant period he would see the same distress recurring. The nation was again upon the eve of a great change. Many plans had been tried to cure evils pressing upon the nation, but without avail. A large, sudden, and evanescent amount of trade had recently manifested itself in the country. This could not last. Commerce would again languish; and if the moment recurred when a high price of food followed a reduction of wages, the consequences would not be obviated by such measures as were now introduced by the right hon. Baronet. The evil would then be enhanced by the loss of the gold which would leave the country. That evil would be greatly aggravated by the disappointment which would be felt by the working classes, who were led to expect from the proposed measures a low price of food, and a continuance, at least, of the present rate of wages. In this they would be sorely disappointed. Before he sat down, he would say a few words to his noble and hon. Friends on his right hand, who more immediately represented the landed interest. Did they wish that the aristocracy should maintain the position they had so long held—a position essential to the preservation of our ancient institutions—the integrity of the Constitution, and the safety of the Crown? Did they wish to retain their titles and estates, and to hand them down inviolate to their descendants? Let them examine this question, use the power they possessed, and force the Ministers to institute a searching inquiry into the cause of the evils of which they complained. They must not trust to a continuance of the system which had ever proved, and would prove inefficient for the purposes for which they advocated it. He would call also on the fundholder, if he wished his property to be rendered safe, and if he desired that public credit should continue unassailed, to oppose the measure now before the House, and to join the landlords in compelling the Minister to institute inquiry. He called upon the merchant and manufacturer, if they desired to secure a trade to themselves and their dependents, by which steady profits were to be realized,

and to put down that system of wild speculation by which, though some had made large fortunes, multitudes had been ruined —to join in calling for and in forcing this inquiry. To the statesman he would say —if he were desirous to restore harmony, to put an end to the unconstitutional proceedings of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and to other dangerous meetings—if he wished, by restoring prosperity to all classes, to maintain peace, safety, and prosperity —to yield this inquiry, and no longer delude himself by expecting efficiently to remedy the evils under which we had so long suffered, while a system was maintained that had so long been the great monster evil, aggravating every other evil, and paralysing every remedy. The hon. Member concluded by submitting his Motion to the House.

SIR G. CLERK said, the original Motion, to which the hon. Member had moved an Amendment, was, that they should take into consideration the Report upon certain Resolutions which had been agreed to in a Committee of that House, for the purpose of making alterations in the duties levied upon the importation of certain articles of Customs. Before that Report was brought up, numerous petitions had been presented to that House, setting forth the inconvenience which every description of trade in the country was suffering in consequence of the uncertainty which prevailed as to whether any or what reductions were to take place. He believed, though a difference of opinion might exist as to some of the propositions included in the Resolutions before the House, yet that with respect to the propriety of a very large proportion of those reductions in duty, there was no difference of opinion whatever. The hon. Member for Birmingham, the representative of one of the greatest manufacturing and commercial towns in the country, had professed to meet those Resolutions by proposing that they should be reported that day six months; but the main argument of his speech was that a great mistake had been committed some years ago with regard to the arrangement of the monetary system of the country; and he contended that a Committee should be appointed to inquire whether all the causes of the distress of the country were not owing to the measure of 1819? It was no doubt a matter of the greatest importance to this country that our currency and monetary system should be placed upon a substantial and sure foundation; but he confessed he was extremely surprised that upon that occasion, when every hour was of consequence, the hon. Member should have attempted to divert the attention of the House from the question properly before it to that subject. He should have thought that the hon. Member would have attempted to have shown that some injurious consequences would have arisen to the country in consequence of the adoption of certain of these measures. [Mr. SPOONER: I intend to do so by and by.] If the hon. Member meant to do so by and by, he felt it to be quite unnecessary to consume the time of the House now. He was obliged to the hon. Member for saying that this was only a preliminary step. When the hon. Member referred to particular items, he should feel bound to state the reasons which had induced Her Majesty's Government to propose these deductions. As it was, after the explanation which the hon. Member had given, he felt that he should be only wasting the time of the House if he went on now.

MR. NEWDEGATE did not know whether many hon. Members were aware of the fact, that contemporaneously with the introduction of these great free-trade measures a Bill had been proposed and read a second time for extending the operation of the Bill of 1819 (of which the hon. Member for Birmingham complained) to Scotland and Ireland. The course adopted by the Government was this—that whilst they brought in measures to expose our domestic industry to foreign competition, and thereby to reduction of price, they at the same time introduced measures restrictive of the currency, which would also depress prices; thereby doubly attacking native industry and the value of its products. He knew the subject was distasteful to the House; but he was quite confident that they could not fully appreciate the effect of any great measures like the present, which would cause a considerable reduction in the price of the articles produced by the labour of the country, if they looked solely at the question of price as a matter between the supply and demand for those articles, and knew nothing of the relation of the medium of exchange to articles which were to be exchanged; for price consisted of two elements: the relation of the articles to be exchanged to each other; and, secondly, of their relation to the medium of exchange —of the value to be given by each party for the use of it. Those who considered price without reference to this second element, saw only half its bearing.

Mr. SPOONER did not wish to press his Motion to a division. He only desired to point out the real aspect of matters, and in some degree to point attention to the injury which had arisen from measures that had hitherto been passed. He would, therefore, withdraw the Motion he had proposed.

Amendment withdrawn. Resolutions to be read a second time.

On the Question that Bronze Manufactures not enumerated, be charged with a duty for every 100*l.* value, 10*l.*,

Mr. SPOONER said, that if the proposed reduction of duty with regard to articles of bronze of foreign manufacture were agreed to, several valuable manufactories in Birmingham would be destroyed, and a great many men thrown out of employment. He would move the omission of the article, and that the present duty be retained.

Mr. MUNTZ hoped his hon. Colleague would withdraw his Motion. He could not understand upon what principle they could abolish protection as regarded land, and not as regarded manufactures. He had told his constituents that if the duty on foreign corn were taken off, they would have to submit to the duty on foreign manufactures being reduced, or perhaps abolished. He had called upon them to deliberate upon the subject, and to decide one way or the other, and they had accordingly decided on trying the policy of reduction. The only fault which he found with that policy was, that the whole of the protective duties were not equally reduced, and upon that point he begged to ask the right hon. Baronet opposite whether he would take measures at the end of three years for accomplishing that object?

Sir R. PEEL would answer the questions of both hon. Gentlemen. The first hon. Member for Birmingham had stated that if the protective duty on foreign bronze articles were reduced from 15*l.* to 10*l.* several bronze manufacturers in Birmingham would be ruined. Now what had been the effect of the present duty? The whole amount of duty paid on the importation of articles of bronze of foreign manufacture during the last year was only 78*l.* They were now going to continue a duty of 10 per cent, and the hon. Gentleman had undertaken to prophesy that the bronze manufacturers of Birmingham would be ruined. He hoped that prediction would be recorded, for it would, perhaps, be worth while to remember it. He would venture to say, that with a duty on the foreign article of 10 per cent, the bronze manufactures of Birmingham would not be ruined; and that in a year hence the amount of duty paid, though it might exceed 78*l.*, would not be such as to cause the slightest apprehension. With respect to the question of the other hon. Member for Birmingham, he thought he had very wisely dissented from the opinion of his Colleague. The hon. Member had asked him the question which the noble Lord opposite had asked him the other night—viz., whether he was prepared to fix any particular period when the protection now continued should terminate? That was a question for the consideration of Parliament. If the hon. Gentleman and those who represented the manufacturing interest should come forward and say that there should be a particular time at which such protection should absolutely cease, he was not at all sure that he would not acquiesce in their views.

Mr. MUNTZ wished for free trade in the true sense of the word, and thought that as the duty had been reduced on the manufactured article, the duty on copper ore, a raw material, should also be reduced.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, that upon the question now before the House, he wished to observe that he had consulted a portion of his constituency residing in Birmingham, because he had, of course, been desirous of not advancing opinions on matters on which he did not possess the opinions of practical persons; and he could assure the House that, day by day, as the measure was more fully seen, so, day by day, did the opinion gain ground that distress must follow, if passed into a law; and that those who felt its effects would not easily be able to recover the injury it must do them. In support of the statement made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, he would read a letter to the House he had received from a person to whom he had applied for information: not feeling himself capable of affording a practical opinion, he had obtained the judgment of one far better versed than himself in the matter. This letter, as he had before observed, would support the statement made by one of the Members for the town of Birmingham; and it had emanated from one of the largest manufacturers in the place, who said he had also consulted several of the principal merchants there, and their conviction was, that in those cases—

"Where much manual labour was required, free

competition with France, Belgium, and Prussia, would be very injurious, and unless we obtained reciprocal favours, would, in many instances, be ruinous," the labour there being so much cheaper. The writer added—"The greater part of the Birmingham and Sheffield articles are now prohibited from entering France; and on the remainder the duties are so great that very few of any kind are sent; pretty nearly the same is the case in Prussia and Belgium; the duties on all English manufactured articles have been increased within the last few years in every country in Europe, and the greatest possible efforts are being made by each Government to supply their own wants."

The document he had read might be taken as a true index of the opinion held by his constituents in the town of Birmingham, and fully corroborated the statement made by one of the hon. Members for that town.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN trusted that the hon. Member for Birmingham would not press his Amendment. At the same time he must say, that the Resolution recognised a principle which by right should be extended to the farmer. Although the right hon. Baronet would not say when he would take off the remaining duties, he must ask what chance any other duty had of being maintained merely as a protection, and not as a revenue duty, now that the keystone—as hon. Gentlemen opposite called it—of protection was gone. The right hon. Baronet said, he expected to see the time when the manufacturers would come and ask him to take off all remaining protective duties; but even there he showed more regard to the manufacturers than he had done to the farmers, for he had not heard that the farmers had yet gone up in procession to the right hon. Baronet to implore him to take away their protection. As the right hon. Baronet claimed credit for being so far-sighted, perhaps he was also clear-sighted; in that case, the right hon. Gentleman would be conferring an obligation upon him (Mr. S. O'Brien), and his friends, by explaining by what process he proposed to distinguish buck-wheat meal from wheat meal. He would challenge any man, even the right hon. Baronet the Member for Stamford, who generally saw as far into a millstone as any man, to distinguish the one from the other by their appearance.

On the Question that the duty on Bronze Powder be 10*l.*,

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, it would be in the recollection of the House, that he had presented a petition, signed by 500 of the paper-stainers of the metropolis, complaining of the proposed reduction of duty on foreign paper. It was but fair that some equivalent should be given to them; and as bronze powder was an article much used in paper-staining, he would propose that it should be allowed to come in duty free. With regard to the reduction of the duty on foreign paper, he believed that the rich alone would be benefited by it. On the common paper the duty would be prohibitory, and the only paper that would come in would be that which would be used in such houses as those in Grosvenor-square. At the present moment, he was sorry to state, that a great number of the employers of these paper-stainers had given notice to their men, that they did not intend that any loss which might arise from the proposed reduction should come out of their profits, but that it should come out of the wages of those whom they employed. A manufacturer at Islington, who employed about sixty hands, had given such a notice; and in another establishment conditional orders had been accepted, the employers holding back one-fifth of the men's wages until the Tariff was settled. In the event of its being passed, one-fifth would be deducted from the wages of these parties, and that he thought would be very unfair towards them. In 1842 the duty was 1*s.* It was then proposed to reduce it to 3*d.*; but, in consequence of representations which were made to the right hon. Baronet opposite, it was allowed to remain unaltered. It was now proposed to reduce it to 2*d.*, and with such a duty the paper-stainers of this country believed that they would not be able to compete with the foreigner. On the best sort of paper made in this country there was an excise duty of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$, while the foreigner paid no excise duty at all; and he thought that if any alteration was to be made, the paper-stainers should at least be allowed to import bronze powder duty free, it being, as he had stated, much used in their trade.

Sir G. CLERK said, he had recently received a deputation from the paper-stainers on the present subject, to whom he had explained that what they had to pay in this country in the way of excise duties did not by any means act as an injury to them, in consequence of the extent of the virtual protection which their manufacture enjoyed. With respect to the bronze powder of Birmingham, it had been admitted that that article had recently so much improved that it was now generally used in this country in preference to that of foreign production. That body had also allowed that with respect to design, the

foreign manufacturers generally excelled them; and the acknowledgment of inferiority in this respect, on their parts, was calculated to encourage the public to patronise the foreign manufacture in preference to the home. But he considered that the best mode by which the manufacturers of this country would improve in the matter of design, was by exposing them to compete with the foreign manufacturer.

Mr. Alderman THOMPSON considered the silk weavers, the hatters, the boot and shoe makers, as well as the paper-stainers and every other home manufacturer, would have equally to complain of this foreign competition.

Motion agreed to.

Upon the Question, that "Butter the cwt. 10*s.* stand part of the Resolution,"

Mr. GROGAN objected to any reduction of the import duties upon butter. He said it formed, if he might so speak, almost the staple manufacture of many parts of Ireland, and that even with the present rate of duty the Irish farmers were barely able to compete with foreigners. How, then, he would ask, could they expect to do so when the duty was reduced from 21*s.* to 10*s.*, as proposed by Her Majesty's Government? He argued that the effect of this reduction would be to drive Irish butter almost entirely out of the market; and he could not conceive how any Irish Member could with propriety support the proposition of the Government to receive the duty. From the years 1827 to 1841, the exportation of Irish butter into Portugal had decreased from 29,909 cwt. to 5,900 cwt., whilst the importation of foreign butter into this country during the same period had increased. Under these circumstances he thought it was not unreasonable to ask, that protection should be continued upon butter and cheese. In 1842, when the Tariff was under consideration in that House, it was considered as an act of justice to Ireland, that the articles of butter and cheese should not be interfered with. He could not see now, why, under a pretext of impending famine, the Government should endeavour to deprive Ireland of one of her most desirable sources of industry. He was surprised that Irish Members had not raised their voices against this proposition; but as they had not, he should do so, and should endeavour to exclude both cheese and butter from the Tariff. He should oppose the Motion.

Sir G. CLERK was not surprised at the opposition of the hon. Member to the proposed reduction of duty upon cheese and butter, especially when he considered, as had been observed by the hon. Member, that they formed the staple manufacture of Ireland. The hon. Member had stated that no reduction was made in the duties upon these articles in the Tariff of 1842, because it would have been considered an act of injustice to Ireland to have done so. Now, he begged to state, that the sole ground upon which his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade and the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government resisted the Motion of the noble Lord opposite, was solely upon the ground of revenue, the amount of duty being 200,000*l.* per annum. He would refer the hon. Member, however, to the state of the butter trade up to the year 1816, when the duty upon foreign butter was not more than 3*s.* per cwt., and up to which time the butter trade in Ireland flourished; and looking to the increase in that trade in Ireland since 1816, he could not see reason to apprehend danger from the importation of foreign butter. The hon. Member had stated that the exportation of Irish butter to foreign countries had decreased; but he had not stated the quantity which had been sent from Ireland into Great Britain. Now the fact was, that the article of butter being one of prime and necessary consumption in this country, had increased in a greater proportion than the increase of population. Unfortunately, in 1825 there was no official account of the quantity of butter imported into this country from Ireland; but it had been ascertained upon data on which perfect reliance might with safety be placed, that the quantity of butter imported into Great Britain from Ireland, from 1825 to 1837, had nearly doubled, being not less at the present time than 1,000,000 cwt. The price of foreign butter imported into England was, and always had been, regulated entirely by the price of the English markets. It was well known that when trade was prosperous generally throughout the manufacturing districts, that a larger quantity of butter was required than this country was able to produce; it was, therefore, necessary for them to get a supply from other sources; but he thought, that instead of the competition of the foreigner, in the article of butter, having an injurious effect upon the Irish producer, it would tend to stimulate him to greater exertions to improve by every means in his power the manufacture of so necessary an article

of life; and if this was the result, he could only say, that the Irish would have nothing to apprehend from foreign competition, more especially with a protective duty of 10*s.* per cwt., which he considered quite ample. He believed the result of this proposition would be, that Irish butter would be so improved as to be able to compete with the best foreign butter produced. He admitted, however, that, considering the article of butter to be one of necessity, the duty was only to be justified on account of the large amount of revenue.

MR. J. TOLLEMACHE hoped the hon. Member for Dublin would press the question to a division; and if he did not, he should himself feel it necessary to take the sense of the House on the proposed duty.

SIR R. H. INGLIS said, that the right hon. Baronet the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had stated that, after all, the hon. Member for Dublin need not be alarmed, for no great deal of butter would be imported. This reduction involved the alternative, that if no more butter was imported than last year, there would be a loss of revenue; but if there was double the quantity imported, it would compete successfully with our own production, which was deprived of protection.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the hon. Baronet had only considered the producers, but the Government would not forget the consumer. By this reduction revenue was risked, but he was confident that it would be made up by increased consumption; nor would the increased importation injure the agricultural interest, for such an injury depended on the quantity produced at home, as compared with the importation; but when the quantity of butter consumed was considered, he was sure the hon. Baronet would feel that care should be taken that there should be no scarcity of that article. It was one of those articles which constituted a comfort of the lower classes, and no such importation would ensue as would injure the agricultural interest. When he resisted the reduction of this duty on former occasions, he did so distinctly on the ground of revenue, which was so large that he could not afford to lose it, but now that there was a relaxation of duties, it ought to be among the first.

LORD G. BENTINCK said: If, Sir, one argument more conclusive than another could have been produced why we should have rejected the proposition of the Government in regard to this article, it was that of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Clerk) who begins by telling you that it is the staple manufacture of Ireland on which it is proposed to reduce the existing protection by one-half; and of which, as he believes, incredible as the statement appears, 1,000,000 cwt. are annually imported from Ireland into this country. Why, good God! Sir, the price of butter, as the right hon. Gentleman says, is 80*s.* per cwt.; and, if you are going to decrease the protection by 10*s.* on 1,000,000 cwt. of butter, the amount lost to Ireland—if Ireland suffers the whole loss—will amount to 500,000*l.* Well, Sir, and if you are not going to reduce the price of butter by taking off protection, of what good will the reduction be to the consumer? If the reduction is to be productive of any advantage to the English consumer, you must reduce the price by reducing the protection. Therefore, I have a right to presume that the object of Her Majesty's Ministers, and the object of this House in giving up an amount of duty little short of 125,000*l.* per annum, must be to reduce the price of butter; and, if you do that, you must injure Ireland in a corresponding degree. I should have thought, Sir, that this was not the time when we should be disposed to carry any measures that could by possibility prove injurious to Ireland. We are told, Sir, that Ireland is, if not in a state of actual famine, at least in great distress; and we are called upon, and we willingly respond to that call, to vote a sum of 230,000*l.* for the purpose of relieving, by public expenditure, the people of that portion of the Empire. If the position of the sister country is then so critical a one, is this the moment, I ask, in which we ought to carry measures that may injure her to the amount of half a million sterling per year? Which are the counties that produce the greatest quantity of butter in Ireland? The county of Cork is, I believe, more celebrated than any other. [HON. MEMBERS: Kerry and Carlow.] Well, Kerry, Cork, and Carlow. Now, what has been the statement made a few days ago, by one who ought to be a good authority upon Irish matters—the "*Times* Commissioner?" We see it stated by the "*Times* Commissioner," that he had it from the authority of the secretary to the savings bank at Cork, that the small agriculturists—the conacre farmers, I believe they are called—the "frieze-coats" of the county of Cork, within a circuit of twenty miles round the city, have laid by no less a sum

than 200,000*l.* in savings alone in the course of the last year. Upon this authority, we find that the small farmers of the county of Cork have saved 200,000*l.*, which, we are told, amounts upon an average to 34*l.* each. So that such is the flourishing state of the county of Cork under protective laws—under protection to the agriculture of Ireland, and protection to Irish produce of all descriptions—wheat, oats, and, above all, butter—that no less a number than 6,000 small farmers have been able to lay by from their savings 34*l.* each within a year. And are you now going, by making an alteration in those laws, to check the prosperity of that large number of industrious agriculturists? I think, Sir, it would be unwise to choose this as the moment in which to withdraw protection from Irish butter. What says the right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer)? Why, he tells us whatever may be the duty upon butter, that exactly the same amount of Dutch butter will be imported? In God's name, then, why not take the duty from the Dutch? I cannot understand the principle upon which Her Majesty's Ministers are proceeding. They fling duties away in large sums—125,000*l.* on butter, and 70,000*l.* on cheese—without any object that I can understand, unless it is to bring foreign produce into competition with English and with Irish produce. I could understand them if they flung away the malt duty—a tax amounting to 60 per cent on the raw material; but they seem to be in no hurry to reduce that. The reduction of the duty on malt would be a measure of relief exclusively conferred upon the English producer and consumer. Yes, the drinkers of beer and the barley growers would divide the entire benefit, and therefore it is that Her Majesty's Ministers will not for the world touch the Malt Tax. If the object of reducing duties is to relieve the consumer, I beg of hon. Gentleman to say whether they do not think a reduction of the duty upon tea would not be as advantageous to the consumer as a reduction of duty upon butter. Yet Her Majesty's Ministers do not propose to reduce the duty upon tea; and why have they not made such a proposition? Why, for no reason that I can see, except that tea does not come into competition with the produce of Great Britain. Well, then, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman says, "Oh, depend upon it, the reduction will not injure Ireland; Ireland has a protective duty of 3*s.* per cwt." Why, has the right hon. Gentleman forgotten that Great Britain was at war with almost the whole of Europe for twenty years before; and was not that a sufficient protection to Ireland? Was there an opportunity of importing butter from Holland, or from any other country? These, Sir, are the reasons why I cordially concur in the opposition to this article being admitted into the schedule now before us.

The House divided on the Question, that Butter 10*s.* cwt. stand part of the Resolution:—Ayes 213; Noes 111: Majority 102.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Anson, Hon. Col.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Bannerman, A.
Barclay, D.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Baring, T.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.
Barnard, E. G.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Botfield, B.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Busfeild, W.
Butler, P. S.
Cardwell, E.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Christie, W. D.
Clay, Sir W.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Currie, R.
Curteis, H. B.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Dennistoun, J.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Dickinson, F. H.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncannon, Visct.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, Adm.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, W.
Evans, Sir De L.
Ewart, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Gisborne, T.
Gill, T.
Gibson, T. M.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goulburn, H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcoat, J.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hogg, J. W.
Hollond, R.
Hornby, J.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Howard, Sir R.

Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Ald.
Hutt, W.
James, W.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, J.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, H.
Kelly, Sir F.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lyall, G.
Macaulay, rt. hon. T. B.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Macnamara, Maj.
M'Carthy, A.
M'Geachy, F. A.
McTaggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Matheson, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Meynell, Capt.
Mildmay, H. St. John
Milnes, R. M.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Morrison, Gen.
Morrison, J.
Moystyn, hon. E. M. L.
Muntz, G. F.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Ord, W.
Osborne, R.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Price, R.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Scott, R.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Smith, B.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. F. J.
Tomline, G.
Towneley, J.
Traill, G.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Tufnell, H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Wakley, T.
Wall, C. B.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, hon. E.
TELLERS.
Young, R.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Acton, Col.
Alford, Visct.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.
Archbold, R.
Arkwright, G.
Austen, Col.
Bagge, W.
Baillie, W.
Baldwin, B.
Bankes, G.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bennett, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, Maj.
Borthwick, P.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Chandos, Marq. of
Christopher, R. A.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Compton, H. C.
Courtenay, Lord
Deedes, W.
Disraeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir H.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Fellowes, E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gore, W. O.
Granby, Marq. of
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heathcote, G. J.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hudson, G.
Hope, A.
Hurst, R. H.
Hussey, T.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Mackenzie, T.
Maclean, D.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Mundy, E. M.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Rolleston, Col.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Spry, Sir S. T.
Thompson, Ald.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Williams, T. P.
Yorke, hon. E. T.
TELLERS.
Grogan, E.
Tollemache, J.

On the Question, that Button Metal for every 100*l.* value, 10*l.* stand part of the Resolution,

MR. SPOONER objected to a reduction of duty on foreign buttons. He was of opinion that unless protection was continued for this branch of manufactures, our trade would suffer materially from German competition. He would not divide the House upon the subject, but content himself by recording his opposition to buttons being included in the schedule.

SIR R. PEEL said, that when the duty received on buttons was 15*l.* per cent, the amount of revenue derivable therefrom had been 9*l.* Under those circumstances, he could not see what apprehensions the button manufacturers could feel by reducing the duty to 10*l.* If his hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Spooner) thought the difference proposed would injure the trade, he (Sir R. Peel) could not agree with him. His hon. Friend really did not give Birmingham fair play.

Question agreed to.

On the Question, that Cotton Articles, or manufactures of cotton, wholly or in part

made up, not otherwise charged with duty for every 100*l.* value, 10*l.* stand part of the the Resolution,

Sir H. HALFORD said, that with regard to the abatement of duty on cotton stockings, from 20 to 10 per cent, the reduction would have a most injurious tendency upon an important article of manufacture in the midland counties. As the Representative of an agricultural and manufacturing district, and connected with land in the midland counties, he would oppose any abatement of duty on cotton hosiery. The present was, he considered, a matter deeply interesting to agriculture in those counties, because the operatives employed in framework knitting in the counties of Leicester and Nottingham, resided for the most part in the country villages in the vicinity of towns, and were dependent upon the poor rates levied upon land, and not upon manufactories, when out of employment. Thus, any abatement in duty likely to cause a less demand for home produce, would have the effect of materially injuring this important branch of native industry. He could refer to documents quoted in that House to show what opinion competent witnesses had formed with respect to the withdrawal of protection from the framework knitters of the midland counties. The hon. Baronet read a portion of the evidence taken before a Commission appointed to inquire into the state of the framework knitters in the counties of Leicester and Nottingham, and proceeded to say that 100,000 persons were employed in the manufacture of cotton hosiery, and that the sum of 2,287,000*l.* was annually paid in wages. The exports for the three years, including 1814-15-16, amounted to 575,872 dozen pairs, and the value to 1,156,022*l.*; while during the ten years from 1834 to 1843, the average declared value fell from 1,136,022*l.* to 410,408*l.* This falling-off was to be traced to Saxon competition; for the home consumer, to meet the low prices of the foreign article, resorted to the manufacture of a fraudulent article in order to compete successfully. The fruits of this competition resulted in an article of so inferior a description, that the manufacture got into discredit, and consequently the demand became gradually less and less. So successful had the Germans also been in producing gloves of a superior description, that gloves could be imported into England at half the price they sold for here. It was not at all unusual for a respectable London and New York house to import gloves from Germany for the wholesale trade. The trade of the framework knitters had declined between 30 and 40 per cent since 1815; and abundant evidence could be adduced to show the distress that prevailed among the persons employed in that branch of manufactures. If this abatement of duty took place, coupled with free trade in corn, the distress of the frameloom operatives would be considerably augmented; because the experience of past years testified that when the price of provisions was low, wages declined in direct ratio; and the condition of the operative population became much aggravated. He saw nothing in anticipation but misery—that misery and ruin which would follow from the competition that would result from the proposed measure. There was much said on the subject of British industry, and on the skill and perseverance of British workmen: that was all true; but the persons who indulged in that species of argument, were not those who would feel the pressure—as that pressure could only be fully felt by the operative, whose interests would be affected by the removal of that protection to which he was entitled.

Mr. GISBORNE did not rise for the purpose of contradicting the statement made by the hon. Baronet as to the misery of the framework knitters; on the contrary, he fully concurred with him that their situation could not be worse; but for many years previous he knew it had not been better. This knowledge he obtained from a long residence among them; and he feared that no measure could be introduced that would cause that branch of trade again to flourish. If anything could alleviate the misery which the hon. Baronet so truly described, it was, in his opinion, the opening of the ports, and giving to those suffering tradesmen food at the lowest price. He did not believe they were adverse to the proposed measures of Her Majesty's Government; he could say, that neither from his constituents, nor any other parties connected with the hosiery trade, had he received any remonstrance against those measures; and he was firmly convinced that the only chance left for the revival of that branch of manufacture, was the carrying into immediate and full effect the system of unshackled free trade.

Colonel ROLLESTON could not understand the argument that if the operatives of the hosiery trade had suffered so much under protection, the reduction of protection one-half could remedy the evil which all

admitted to exist. He could not think how hon. Gentlemen who adopted such an argument, could reconcile to their own minds what involved so apparent a contradiction. But, however they might reconcile it to their own minds, or endeavour at present to explain it away to the operatives, the time would come when their interests would be so materially affected as to convince all parties of their mistake. The subject then before the House was one of no ordinary interest, as it concerned a very large class of the community; and, being so, it should not be hastily legislated on. It demanded serious attention—it required due consideration—especially when it was well known that of the working classes in manufacturing districts, even in a single town, there were no less than one thousand families totally dependent for relief either on public charity or the workhouse. Under such circumstances, the proposition of the right hon. Baronet should be well considered before ultimately decided on; a proposition, the tendency of which would be to effect a greater depression. For his part, after giving the subject due consideration, and knowing the injurious effects which must follow, he would enter against the reduction of the present protection his most decided protest.

MR. R. M. MILNES would feel it his duty to divide the House on the subject. An unjust accusation had been thrown out against those on his side of the House, that because they were themselves deprived of protection they were indifferent about the interests of others. He was quite sure so unworthy a sentiment never passed through their minds. Before, therefore, they would give up the cause of the hosier and the handloom weaver; before they would declare their case hopeless, they should make an effort for the continuance of that protection which they now enjoyed.

SIR G. CLERK said, that the House must regret to hear of the melancholy picture that had been drawn by the hon. Baronet behind him (Sir H. Halford); but they must still remember that this was the state of things as they had existed under a system of complete protection. The hon. Member for Leicestershire had stated that the number of persons employed in the hosiery trade was 100,000; and that, a very short time ago, they had exported goods to the value of one million sterling. [Sir H. HALFORD: In 1815.] That in 1815 they had exported goods to the value of one million sterling; but that their exports had since been reduced to four hundred thousand pounds. He had attributed that falling-off to the fact of fraudulent goods having injured the character of English goods in the foreign market. But the House would observe that the prosperity of the trade depended on its competition with the foreign trade; for if the labours of the framework knitters of Leicester and Nottingham were confined to the home market, they must remain in the greatest state of destitution; 100,000 persons being employed in the trade. The only chance of improving their condition would be by giving them a foreign trade. It was useless to prevent the introduction into this country of hosiery goods, unless means were taken to give them a foreign market; otherwise they would do no good to the framework knitters of Leicester and Nottingham. The House must consider whether these measures would have a tendency to extend the foreign trade. If so, they would confer a benefit on the framework knitters, as well as on the other manufactures of this country. For it was not competition, which the hon. Member for Leicestershire said had been the cause of their misery, but their exclusion from foreign markets. Under these circumstances, even if a complete protection were given them, and they were satisfied with the monopoly of the home market, they would be effectually prevented from introducing those improvements into the manufacture by which only they would be enabled to compete with foreign manufactures. The whole amount of duty received under the 20 per cent, had been only 700*l*., showing that it was quite insignificant. Believing that the continuance of the protection would not in the slightest degree benefit the operatives, he could not consent to any alteration in the proposal.

MR. STRUTT had attended a great meeting of the manufacturers of the midland counties, a few years ago, at Derby, at which statements were made as to the condition of their trade; and those statements were equally unfavourable with those the House had now heard; and yet the object of that meeting was to petition for the abolition of the Corn Laws, and the general freedom of trade. The ground the manufactures took on that occasion was this. They said—"We are now placed under certain disadvantages, compared to foreign countries, by the operation of the Corn Laws, combined with the restrictions laid on our trade: we have thus been, from year to year, driven out of

foreign markets; our profits have been thereby reduced, and our operatives have been brought to the melancholy state in which they now are." Their object was not to petition for any protection whatever, but simply to ask that they should be placed on the same footing as the manufacturers of other nations; that they should have the same means of obtaining food, and be placed exactly on the same footing; and then, they stated, they should not be afraid of entering into fair competition.

Mr. WYNN ELLIS said, he had presented a petition signed by 7,000 frame-work knitters, praying for the adoption of the measure of Government. He quite agreed in the statements that had been made as to the effect of those measures on the trade. In 1829 he had canvassed all parts of the town of Leicester, and nothing could exceed the misery and poverty which then everywhere prevailed. The tales told him were perfectly horrible: all this existed under a state of protection, the great panacea of the day.

Sir J. HOBHOUSE said, he had presented a petition from the mayor and town-council of Nottingham, which had been agreed to unanimously—also a petition signed by 12,000 of the inhabitants of Nottingham—in favour of the measure; and such was their confidence in those measures, that though they considered Government had not carried the principle to the full extent, namely, immediate repeal, yet, for the sake of the benefit which the measure would confer on the country generally, they begged that their own protection might be taken away. Though he (Sir J. Hobhouse) had received no communication on the subject, he was far from denying that distress prevailed at Nottingham. Since his connexion with that town, he had not known a single year, or portion of a year, in which such complaints had not been made; but this had been during the continuance of the protective system. There was something vicious in the system under which these attempts of the frame-work knitters had been carried on; they had been seeking to force a species of manufacture which could not be carried on advantageously under that system; and when the measures of Government were carried, they would at least have no more to complain of than any person engaged in other manufactures.

Mr. W. MILES asked, if when the amount of protection was 20 per cent, Saxon hosiery came into this country, how much more would come in when that protective duty would be reduced to 10 per cent? Would not, he would ask, a very large quantity be imported? Would not, then, the Saxon trade deprive this country even of the advantage of a home market? Would not the natural consequence be the total ruin of the operatives in Nottingham on its reduction to 10 per cent? Total free trade, or the proposed reduction in the present protective duty for hosiery, must almost, if not altogether, drive the home manufacture out of the market. He hoped, therefore, an effort would be made on that occasion to allow those operatives to remain as they were; for if now they were not able to compete with the foreigner with a duty of 20 per cent, would it not be totally impossible for them to compete with him when it would be reduced one half?

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE thought there should be a great distinction made between the state of the trade and the state of the operative. Nothing could be more frightful than the condition of the operative. How came it to be so bad? Because he did not receive his full share of the profits. Did people suppose, were the duty raised to 40 per cent, it would at all be to the advantage of the operative, that while the master manufacturer received 18*s*. a dozen, the operative only received his 8*s*. Was that a fair share for him to receive? Last year there was a law passed called the "Ticket Act," the carrying out of which, he thought, would be of great advantage; and believing it would be useful in its operation, he would call on the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government to enforce that law, which, if properly administered, would confer great benefit.

Viscount INGESTRE wished to know, if at the meeting alluded to by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Strutt), there had been a single operative present to assert the claims of his class; if not, and the meeting consisted only of capitalists, he could view the proceedings only as an attempt to reduce yet further the miserable pittance the men still had.

Mr. FREWEN, in allusion to the remark of the hon. Member for Finsbury, declared his belief there was not a magistrate in the county of Leicester who would not do his utmost to carry into effect the law of last Session.

Lord G. BENTINCK said, that that hon. Gentleman would have them believe that all the distress had originated in the pro-

tection which was given to the stockingers; but he would like to know, if protection were that bane to the stockingers, how came it that the Saxon, under protection the most stringent, was able to enter into competition with the stockingers of England, so as to be able almost to drive them out of the market? He apprehended there was no country in which manufactures were more stringently protected than in Saxony, and yet the result was, that Saxony was able to rival England, not only at home but in all the markets of the world. He recollected the account which was given by Mr. M'Gregor, of the manufactures of Saxony, He stated that there stockings were made for 3*d.* a pair; while the Member for Nottingham told the House that there the charge was 8*s.* a dozen. He wanted to know how the stockinger of Nottingham and of Leicestershire could, under a productive duty of 10 per cent, and charging 8*s.* a dozen for stockings, compete with the Saxon who could sell his stockings at 3*d.* a pair, or 3*s.* a dozen? The hon. Member for Leicestershire had stated to the House that 100,000 persons were engaged in the stocking business. Was his noble Friend who asked protection for agriculture, prepared to try the experiment of free trade on the 100,000 stockingers?

The House divided on the Question—Ayes 190; Noes 102: Majority 88.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Archbold, R.
Baillie, Col.
Baine, W.
Baldwin, B.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.
Barnard, E. G.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Blake, M. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Botfield, B.
Bouverie, H. E. P.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Busfeild, W.
Cardwell, E.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Christie, W. D.
Clay, Sir W.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Currie, R.
Curteis, H. B.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Dennistoun, J.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncannon, Visct.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, Adm.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ebrington, Visct.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, E.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Gibson, T. M.
Gill, T.
Gisborne, T.
Gladstone, Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hollond, R.
Hornby, J.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Hutt, W.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, J.
Jocelyn, Visct.
Kelly, Sir F.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lyall, G.
Macnamara, Maj.
M'Carthy, A.
McGeachy, F. A.
McTaggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Matheson, J.
Meynell, Capt.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Morrison, J.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Muntz, G. F.
Napier, Sir C.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, J.
O'Connell, M. J.
Osborne, R.
Paget, Col.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Price, Sir R.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sandon, Visct.
Scott, R.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Smith, B.
Smith, J. A.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Tollemache, hon. F. J.
Tomline, G.
Towneley, J.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Tufnell, H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Young, R.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Acton, Col.
Alford, Visct.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arkwright, G.
Austen, Col.

Bagge, W.
Baillie, W.
Bankes, G.
Barrington, Visct.
Bateson, T.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, Major
Borthwick, P.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Chandos, Marq. of
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Clifton, J. T.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Compton, H. C.
Courtenay, Lord
Deedes, W.
Disraeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Fellowes, E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Fox, S. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heathcote, G. J.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, R.
Hope, A.
Houldsworth, T.
Hudson, G.
Hurst, R. H.
Hussey, T.
Ingestre, Visct.
Irton, S.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Maclean, D.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Mundy, E. M.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Palmer, R.
Pigot, Sir R.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. G.
Rolleston, Col.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Thompson, Ald.
Tollemache, J.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Williams, T. P.
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.
Halford, Sir H.
Packe, C. W.

Further consideration of the Tariff adjourned till Monday.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 16, 1846.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Birmingham, and the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's Day, for the Better Observance, and against the Transacting of Business on the Sabbath.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 16, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBERS SWORN. For Stafford, the Hon. Swynfen Thomas Carnegie; for Windsor, Ralph Neville, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1°. Consolidated Fund (£8,000,000).
2°. Fever (Ireland).
Reported. Out Pensioners' Payment (Greenwich and Chelsea).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By several hon. Members, from an immense number of places, against Repeal of the Corn Laws; and also from a great many in favour of Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. French, from the Rev. Browning Drew, Curate of Ballycahane, complaining of the Distribution of Church Patronage (Ireland).—By Sir Robert Harry Inglis, from Inhabitants of Sydenham, and Members of the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's Day, for Better Observance of the Sabbath.—By Mr. Goulburn, from Chancellor, Master, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge; by Sir Robert Harry Inglis, from Clergy of the Deanery of Chelke, and Inhabitants of the Parish of Llandrillo-yn-rhos; and by Mr. Sotheron, from Clergy of the Deanery of Aubury, against Union of Saint Asaph and Bangor Dioceses.—By Lord George Bentinck, from Grand Jurors of the County of Tipperary, against the Corn Importation Bill.—From Electors of the Borough of Bridport, for Commercial Reform.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Merchants, Brokers, and Traders of the City of London, for a Speedy Adjustment of the proposed Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Persons engaged in Linen Manufacture (Ireland), for Free Trade.—From Dealers in Tea and Inhabitants of Tooting, for Alteration in Duties on Tea.—By Sir Howard Douglas, from the Liverpool Shipowners' Association, against the proposed Measure respecting Timber.—By Mr. Hume, from Dealers in Tobacco, in Ryde, for Reduction of Duty on Tobacco.—By Lord John Manners, from Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen, in favour of the Bequests for Pious and Charitable Purposes Bill.—By Mr. Hume, from Inhabitants of the Parish of Marylebone, for Alteration of Law of Blasphemy.—By Sir Benjamin Hall, from Vestrymen of the Parish of St. Pancras, against Union with other Parishes.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Millworkers in Dundee, for Inquiry into Ill Treatment of Girls in Factories.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Inhabitants of the City of London, for Alteration of the Funding System.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Lazarus Jakes, for Inquiry into Proceedings against him as Overseer of the Parish of Swaffham.—By Mr. Hume, from Members of the Society of Master Carpenters, for Alteration or Repeal of the Metropolitan Buildings Act.—By Viscount Alford, from Protestant Dissenters of Ridgmount, against Enrolment of the Militia.—By Viscount Alford, from William Cole, for a Superannuation Fund for Poor Law Officers.—By Mr. Ormsby Gore, from Grand Jury of Sligo, for Alteration of Law respecting Railways (Ireland).—By Mr. French, from Trustees of the Darlington Savings' Bank, for Alteration of the Savings' Banks Act.

IRISH ARMS ACT.

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department whether the attention of the Government had been directed to the facilities which the Irish Arms Act afforded to the ill-disposed, to possess themselves unlawfully of arms; and if the Government had it in contemplation to bring in any measure to amend that Act, especially as regarded the provisions for registering arms.

SIR J. GRAHAM was understood to observe, that the Irish Arms Act would expire in the course of the present Session, He certainly admitted that all the benefit anticipated from the passing of that Act had not been realized; nor was it, on the other hand, attended with the evils that

some hon. Gentlemen apprehended. He was afraid that, in the present circumstances of Ireland, it would not be possible to leave that country without some enactment with regard to the possession of arms; and he saw no reason why the Government should not propose its renewal (so we understood) with proper amendments.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. SHAW begged to ask the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government a question in respect of the Bill for the prevention of crime in Ireland. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had the other night, at the request of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. O'Connell), and contrary to the usual course, agreed to follow the precedent set by Lord Althorp, with reference to a Bill of a similar nature; and instead of reading the Bill a first time, as a matter of course, on coming from the House of Lords, to have it printed, and then give notice of the first reading. In that case, the Bill had been passed in the House of Lords on Friday the 22nd of February, 1833; and Lord Althorp at once moved that it should be printed, and gave notice that he would move the first reading on the Wednesday following, the 27th, and he moved it accordingly on that day. In 1833, Parliament had not met till the 29th of January. In the present year, Parliament met on the 22nd of January. The Bill passed not till Friday last, the 13th of March; and the question he (Mr. Shaw) would then ask the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), was, whether in point of the time of proceeding with the Bill, he would follow the precedent of Lord Althorp; or at what time the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) would proceed with the Bill?

Sir R. PEEL believed, that, on the occasion referred to by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Secretary of State for the Home Department introduced the Bill, and immediately moved that it should be printed. It was true that in answer to a question put by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Cork, the other evening, he stated that he thought it desirable that the precedent which had been so recently established should in the present case be followed. He also stated that it was his earnest wish to name the earliest day for the consideration of this measure. But the right hon. Gentleman must have heard the prayer of the petition which he presented this very evening, stating that the greatest inconvenience, was experienced from the measures of the Government not being decided upon. He was most anxious to proceed with those measures, though he was far from imputing any wish on the part of any hon. Member to occasion unnecessary delay. He had already stated that he was willing to postpone the consideration of the sugar duties, in order to give precedence to the Irish Bill. He did not know whether the House would conclude the debate on the Tariff to-night. He had hoped they might. He had fixed the second reading of the Corn Bill for to-morrow (Tuesday). He would then name the earliest possible day for the first reading of the Irish Life Protection Bill, and he was determined to proceed with it as rapidly as he could.

ERROR IN ENLISTING SOLDIERS.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE was desirous of asking a question of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War. He understood that a soldier of the 8th Regiment had been brought to court-martial for desertion, and that he in his defence pleaded that, strictly speaking, he was not a soldier; that he had not been duly and legally enlisted; because by the Mutiny Act it was provided that when a man was enlisted he must be attested by a magistrate acting in and for that district. In the case he was mentioning, it appeared that the soldier had been enlisted in one county, and was attested in another. It was considered that this enlistment was not legal, and the consequence was that he was immediately discharged. It appeared that there were no less than 5,000 or 6,000 men in the same position. No less than 400 out of 1,500 of the Grenadier Guards had been liberated on that ground. Other soldiers had also left their regiments—for he could not call it desertion—on the same ground—namely, that they were not legally soldiers at all. Now he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War, what was the course of conduct which the Horse Guards meant to pursue? and to submit the question to him whether it would not be desirable to bring in a short Bill to confirm these enlistments? He understood that another course had been suggested, which was to compel the men who had thus been brought into the army to refund the money they had received, and to make them pay for their accoutrements. But that was a course which he believed would not be so effectual

as the passing a short Bill to make the attestations legal. By the present law a man who had served in the army twenty-one years was entitled to a pension; and some of these men who had been improperly attested, but having served a considerable term of years, were alarmed, lest they should lose their pensions. He did not believe the Government would take any such advantage; but the fear existed, because what was good for one was good for the other, and it might be urged against the men that they, not having been legally enlisted, were not entitled to any pension. Many of these men had already served ten, and in some cases fifteen years, and they were afraid that all that period of service would be lost, in consequence of their having been enlisted in one county, and attested in another. He was quite sure that the Government were prepared to set these things square on the best plan possible, which he believed would be by bringing in a short Bill. It was quite clear that something should be done for the sake of those men who had already faithfully served a great number of years in the service of their country.

Mr. S. HERBERT said, it was perfectly true that within the last few days a great number of applications from soldiers in the Horse Guards had been received, which had been correctly described by the hon. Gentleman opposite. But it was not the case that any soldier had, upon such application as stated, been informed that the parties alluded to would be deprived, after years of hard service, of their future pensions. On the contrary, every soldier, notwithstanding his enlistment might be illegal, by continuing in the service, would have the full benefit of his past services, and would receive his pension under the regulations that now existed. With respect to the request which had been made, that a claim should be advanced against soldiers who were about to leave the army, he thought that nothing could possibly be more unjust to the soldiers. Whether there were or were not in the army so great a number of persons as the hon. Gentleman thought could claim their discharge on the ground of this technical flaw, he was not prepared to say. The subject was one of very great importance; it was under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; and, at a future period, he should be able to state what their decision was.

Subject at an end.

FEVER (IRELAND)—GOVERNMENT MEASURES.

Mr. W. SMITH O'BRIEN wished to ask the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who had brought in a Bill with reference to the fever prevailing in Ireland, whether he had any objection to state when the discussion on that Bill would be taken, and whether the second reading, which was fixed for this evening, would come on.

Sir J. GRAHAM was understood to say that he really hoped the second reading of this Bill would come on to-night, even if it were after twelve o'clock. He hoped the hon. Member would allow the second reading of the Bill to proceed. It was his earnest desire to give the House the fullest opportunity of discussing the Bill.

Mr. W. SMITH O'BRIEN said, his object was not so much to discuss the Bill, as to call the attention of the House to the measures which were required on other grounds than the representations of Government. The obvious course to be adopted was that recommended by the hon. Member for Finsbury, to send the starving people supplies of food, and thereby avert the necessity of sending them physic.

Mr. P. SCROPE said, he had read the Papers which had been laid on the Table by the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham), and since printed; and the inference he drew from them certainly was, first, that what the Irish people wanted was not physic, but food, to prevent the impending famine, and what arose as a consequence; and, in the next place, that no time was to be lost. If they were to go through the debate on corn, and the Tariff, before they had an opportunity of discussing the question whether any further measures besides fever hospitals were required, the delay would be a most unfortunate one. He must ask the right hon. Baronet to give the House the opportunity, when the Bill went into Committee, of discussing whether any ulterior measures, with the view of giving food rather than physic, were not desirable. He should then move, either as an Amendment, or an additional clause to the Bill—

"That, in order to avert the impending famine from the people of Ireland, it is expedient to enlarge the provisions of the Irish Poor Law, so as not merely to secure medical relief to the poor in the sick hospitals, but, likewise, by timely supplies of food, to prevent their being reduced to that state of starvation."

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that the documents which the hon. Member had referred

to proved to demonstration that no time should be lost in providing a suitable remedy to prevent the progress of fever in Ireland; and he hoped the hon. Member would concur in thinking that this measure was most pressing, however important and necessary other measures might be to which he had referred. The alteration of the Irish Poor Law was certainly a very important question; and if the hon. Member wished it to be discussed, it might be made the subject of a future and substantive Motion. But he hoped the hon. Member would not allow it to interfere with this question of providing the means of arresting the progress of fever—a measure in which there ought to be no delay whatever. He might state, in reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury with respect to the supply of food, that in cases of urgent necessity, very ample arrangements had been made by the Government to meet that necessity; and when the proper time arrived, Government would ask for the sanction of Parliament to the steps which had been taken, availing themselves of their responsibility to make such provision.

MR. HUME hoped the Government would not think of distributing food: what the Irish people wanted was employment. He hoped that no gratuitous distribution would be made, except in cases of very urgent necessity; and the line might be drawn pretty accurately. He wished strongly to protest against the idea of making the whole populace of Ireland a nation of paupers. Let employment be given them: that was what was wanted.

SIR J. GRAHAM: What the Government proposes to do is to give them labour whereby an opportunity will be afforded them of obtaining wages; and in addition to that, facilities will also be given them for obtaining food for the wages so earned, at a very reasonable price.

MR. O'CONNELL: That is just what the Irish Members desire; but I must also remind the right hon. Baronet, that not a shilling of the sums voted for public works, or of the money subscribed for the construction of railways, has as yet been laid out.

MR. WAKLEY said, it appeared from all the Reports that the fever owed its origin to want of food. To provide labour must be a work of time; and he wanted to know why the poor Irish and the poor English should receive different treatment under the same Government? In England, if a number of the labouring people were destitute, the law provided them a maintenance at once; and if a poor man died from starvation, after his application for relief was refused, the officers refusing were, in the eyes of the law, guilty of murder. But in Ireland it appeared that hundreds and thousands of destitute people might die from starvation, and no law was violated. He was astonished that the Irish Members could be quiet under such circumstances; if he were an Irish Member, the English Parliament should have no rest so long as such a state of things existed. So far from condemning the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) who gave vent the other night to his feelings in terms which the occasion demanded, he admired him for the spirit he had displayed. He wished it to be explained why a different course of policy should be adopted with regard to the two countries. He agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Montrose as to the desirableness of giving the people work, and he would support any measure having that object. But it was now apparent, from the official returns which Government had received, that throughout Ireland the most frightful distress prevailed; and from whom did this information come? From the medical officers of the poor-law districts in Ireland, who had opportunities not only of obtaining information from the infirmaries and dispensaries in the country, but were well acquainted with the state of the poor in the various districts in which they practised. Now the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government stood better with the people of England in respect of this subject than any other Member of the House. In the first week of November, foreseeing what was likely to arise, the right hon. Baronet had proposed that the ports of the country should be opened; and because he could not carry such a proposal, he resigned his office in the Government. Such conduct was in the highest degree commendable; and he for one envied the feelings the right hon. Baronet must experience at that moment. The public expected that when the noble Lord the Member for the city of London had an opportunity of forming an Administration, he would have done so, and would have acted upon the principles which he propounded in his letter to his constituents. Instead, however, of doing so, after some petty squabble, the noble Lord abandoned the prospect of forming an Administration, and

the predictions which the right hon. Baronet made at the close of the last year had since been fulfilled. Now, he should like to ask the hon. and learned Recorder for Dublin, whether he was satisfied that the accounts with regard to the deplorable condition of the people of Ireland the right hon. Baronet had given to the House were not exaggerated? He should propose that the Poor Law should be at once amended in preference to their passing any fever Bills. If that were not done, or if it were not distinctly stated why a different rule of conduct was to be observed by the Imperial Parliament towards the poor of the one country and of the other; until that statement were made, he for one (although he acknowledged that what the Government was doing with respect to supplying the Irish poor with fever hospitals was very right and proper), thought that one paramount duty was being neglected, namely, that the law should be made to provide for the poor of Ireland. It was admitted by nearly every one who had furnished these statistics, that the cause of fever was to be found in the deficiency of food, or the bad quality of it. He had stated on a previous night that prevention was better than cure, and he considered it the Government's bounden duty to adopt such measures as would, for the time coming, render the sister country less liable to the visitations of famine, and, consequently, of fever.

SIR R. PEEL: Sir, I do hope that the House will not be led into a debate, the effect of which must necessarily be to postpone the consideration of that measure which it is understood is to occupy our attention this evening. The hon. Gentleman and the House will recollect that the Tariff provides for the remission or the repeal of duty on many articles of subsistence —and that, so soon as the Tariff shall have received the sanction of this House, that is to say, so soon as the Resolutions affirmed by the Committee shall have been reported, there will be the opportunity on the part of the Government, with respect to every article excepting those in the Corn Bill, of immediately making an order for remitting the duty on those articles in bond. Therefore, the more haste we can make in passing the Tariff, the more are we prepared to provide the people of Ireland with free access to many articles of subsistence; and I do hope, therefore, that however important or interesting this subject may be, the House will not allow itself to be led away from the debate which is immediately connected with our progress in supplying the people of Ireland with food. I do assure the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Scrope), that there cannot be a matter of higher importance than that to which he has adverted, namely, what shall be the claim or rights on the part of the destitute poor of Ireland to relief. I am sure the hon. Gentleman must recollect what difficulty the noble Lord had in passing the Irish Poor Law Bill, in applying those qualifications which that Bill imposes; and how many persons there were professing, and I believe feeling, the deepest interest in the welfare of Ireland, who did offer to that Bill, even with all its qualifications and restrictions, their most strenuous opposition, thinking that the tendency of it was rather to interfere with the current of private charity, and to lower, rather than to improve, the condition of the Irish people. If you are to go on the ground of the absolute right to relief of the destitute in Ireland, I can only say, that you will be opening a question which, as regards their social condition, will be attended with the most serious consequences. In the present case, I would strongly advise the House not to attempt any legislative rule as to the principles on which relief is to be given. It requires very great tact and discretion on the part of the Executive; and, if you attempt to apply any general principle as to the relief you will give, or the regulations on which you will give it, you will find that utterly impossible. In the case of a number of rich landed proprietors living together, surely Government has a right to throw upon them the duty of providing relief, and the responsibility of refusing to do so, supposing they did refuse. But, on the other hand, there may be in remote districts, as in Galway or Nenagh, an absolute necessity for Government interference, neglecting all such other modes of relief. The circumstances of different districts and parishes are so various, that no legislative rule can be laid down. You had much better trust Government with the discretion. You had much better not ask them what the principles are on which they propose to act in this matter, in order that persons may not take advantage of that knowledge when applying for relief. Let us, in some cases, encourage private liberality; in others, dispense with it; hoping that there will be no abuse of the authority we assume; and hereafter we shall come down to Parliament, lay the whole case before you, and ask for an in-

demnity, if indemnity be required. That is the course which has been pursued in former cases. There was no jealousy on the part of the Executive Government; and if the emergency was one requiring so much tact and local knowledge in the application of a remedy, for the purpose of not establishing a precedent, and preventing dangerous abuses, the House was induced to leave it in the hands of Government. I assure the House that the fullest information with reference to every farthing that is granted will be hereafter given them. But, on the other hand, considering what effect the passing of these Resolutions, which embody so many articles of food, will have upon trade, upon employment, and upon the supply of articles of food, I hope that Gentlemen will have some control upon those feelings of sympathy which do them so much honour; and, seeing the advantage that is to be gained by the House deciding upon the great commercial questions that are now before it, I hope we shall endeavour to abstain from being needlessly led aside from their consideration.

CAPTAIN JONES believed that no applications for relief in Ireland had been refused. In the beginning of January, the number of persons in the poor house, receiving relief, was smaller than it was at the same period in the year before, by at least five per cent; and it had been gradually falling off.

MR. W. SMITH O'BRIEN said, he did not see how the reduction of the duty on butter, silks, and other articles in the Tariff, could have any effect on the relief of the Irish poor. He did not believe the measures of Government were sufficient for the purpose in view. Of course, after the statement of the right hon. Baronet, that he took on himself the full responsibility of making provision for the distress, he was not entitled to make any further observations; but he must enter his protest against the House considering anything of more importance than the relief of the Irish destitute poor.

Subject at an end.

RECENT REDUCTIONS OF DUTY.

LORD G. BENTINCK had given notice to the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury that he would ask a question with reference to the discussion coming on that night. From a recent return to the House, as to the effect of the total abolition of the excise duties on auctions and glass, it appeared that there had been a reduction of 450 excise officers, and a reduction in the cost of the excise of 52,636*l.* The total amount of excise duties on auctions and glass had been estimated at 900,000*l.* in round figures—308,000*l.* in auctions, and 642,000*l.* in glass. The question he had to ask was one very pertinent to the matter now before the House—whether similar happy results had ensued from the reduction upon customs duties which had taken place between 1842 and the present time; and, further, whether the right hon. Baronet estimated that a reduction of Custom-house officers and of the expense of maintaining them might be fairly expected from the reductions in customs duties now under consideration?

SIR R. PEEL: Perhaps the House will recollect that when I proposed the entire reduction of the auctions and glass duties, I gave as a reason for the total reduction of those duties not only the immense advantage that there would be in the case of the excise duties on the total abolition of all interference with the ordinary course of business by the Excise, thus permitting the freest scope to the ingenuity, and skill, and capital of all men engaged, and all others who might be inclined to engage in the manufacture of glass; but I stated that there would also be this advantage from the total repeal of the existing excise duty, namely, that you could altogether dispense with that establishment of excise officers who have been employed in the superintendence of the trade and the duties. And that result has followed in the case of the auction and glass duties. My noble Friend has quoted, very correctly, the number of officers whose services have been dispensed with, and the saving that has been made upon their salaries; and I must say, that that document is a conclusive proof of the advantage, when the revenue will admit of it, of making a total reduction of certain duties, rather than in spreading your reductions over many, which continues the interference of the Excise with the ordinary occupations of manufacturers, and also makes it necessary to keep up nearly the same amount of officers for the purpose of superintending the trade and collecting a diminished amount of revenue; and, therefore, Sir, I think nothing can be more satisfactory than that document, in so far as the excise is concerned. Then my noble Friend asks me this question: as customs duties, of at least an equal amount, have been either materially

reduced or repealed, has there been a saving in the establishment of the Customs, both in respect to the number of officers and their salaries, at all equivalent in amount to the reduction which has taken place in the Excise? I am bound at once to tell my noble Friend, there has not been a corresponding reduction, and that, in point of fact, from the course of trade, there cannot be such a corresponding reduction. Because, when you reduce a customs duty, even if you repeal it altogether, you do not at all dispense with the obligation of the ship bringing in the duty-free article reporting itself, being placed in charge, and an entry being made of the duty-free goods, equally with the entry which is required for goods subject to duty. You require it for two purposes. Firstly, for a statistical purpose; for a correct account of consumption and of the amount of the goods imported into this country. And when we proposed in 1844 a total repeal of the duties on many articles of customs, it was objected to us that there would not be the same opportunity as before existed of ascertaining the consumption of food. We saw then that we should take a correct account of the articles of food brought into this country. Another reason why this superintendence should continue was, that they should take precaution lest any articles repealed be imported without notice. For instance, they could not permit cotton to be brought in without some superintendence. The ship bringing in the goods must be taken under charge, and an entry of the goods taken. In the case of the repeal of the customs duties there has not been, and there cannot be, the same reduction of the establishment which has taken place in the Excise. But I will administer some consolation to my noble Friend, by showing him what has been the increase of trade in consequence of the reduction of the duties. That increase of trade implies an increase in the Customs establishment, and although we do not gain the advantage which we give in the Excise, yet we have an equivalent advantage of very great importance; and I hold in my hand an account with respect to the principal ports in this country of the number of ships with cargoes from abroad, which entered into these ports, and the number of entries. So desirous am I of affording every information on a subject of this kind that I would rather move for a return of the number of ships and of the number of entries. But the following account will show what has taken place with regard to the increase or suspension of trade. Contemporaneously with the Report of the Customs Duties, here is an account of the number of vessels which entered into the principal ports with cargoes from foreign countries, and the number of entries at the Custom-house:—

Ports.	Years.	Ships with cargoes from foreign ports.	Number of entries.
London ...	1842	6370	484,000
	1845	7521	567,000
Liverpool...	1842	3285	188,000
	1845	3900	220,000
Newcastle .	1842	612	22,000
	1845	908	30,000
Dublin.....	1842	261	21,700
	1845	307	30,219
Dundee ...	1842	312	7,700
	1845	415	9,600
Glasgow ...	1842	280	22,000
	1845	418	30,700

Therefore, my noble Friend will see that there has been an immense increase of trade in the country, that there was a much greater number of ships and entries in the latter year than in the former, a circumstance which prevents any decrease in the Customs establishment, because a much greater number of officers are required for the purpose of making the entries. But though there may not be that advantage in reducing the customs duties which we have in reducing the excise duties, yet I prove that we have a corresponding advantage.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

The further proceedings on the Report of the Customs and Corn Importation Resolutions was resumed.

On the Question, that Hops, the cwt., 2*l.* 5*s.*, stand part of the Resolution,

Mr. PLUMPTRE said, this was a subject of deep and paramount importance to the county he had the honour to represent, and with which, of course, he was principally conversant, though he had every reason to believe that the matter was of equal, if not of greater magnitude, as respected Sussex and other hop-growing counties. In 1842 the duty on the import of hops had been reduced from 8*l.* 10*s.*, or 9*l.*, to 4*l.* 10*s.*; but the latter sum was certainly acceded to by the hop-growers, as not an inadequate amount of protection. It was now proposed, however, to reduce the duty

from 4*l.* 10*s.* to 2*l.* 5*s.*; and the hop-growers were universally of opinion, that under such a duty they would be utterly unable to maintain a competition with the foreign producer. It should be recollected the home hop-grower had to pay an excise duty of 1*l.* per cwt., a burden which, of course, the foreign producer had not to bear, and which, therefore, operated, *pro tanto*, in favour of the foreigner, and against the home producer. The real amount of protective duty on the English hops was therefore reduced to 25*s.* per cwt.; a duty entirely inadequate to protect the hop planter of this country. Those who were acquainted with the growth of hops knew that it required some time to bring the article to perfection; and that bringing a plantation into a state fit for production was attended with heavy preliminary expenses. Moreover, large sums were invested in the building of vast houses in which to dry the hops, so that a great amount of capital was invested in the raising of hops. There were from 20,000 to 30,000 acres occupied in the raising of hops in Kent alone. And it was a most important consideration in connexion with this subject, and showed how inseparable from the question of protection were the interests of labour—that in the growth of hops, at least 8*l.* more per acre were expended than in the cultivation of any other species of arable land; that is, that where 10*l.* per acre was expended in the wages of labour in the growth of hops, only 2*l.* per acre would be expended in the same way in the cultivation of wheat or any other grain. The labour likewise engaged in the raising of hops was not that of men alone, but of women and children. So that, in fact, in the hop districts, large populations had grown up around and arisen from the hop plantations in which they were engaged. The reduction of the duty would, by exposing the hop planters of this country to a ruinous competition, inflict irreparable injury on their interests. It was but justice, therefore, that, under such circumstances, if the customs duty were to be thus ruinously reduced in favour of the foreigner, at least the excise duty should be proportionally reduced in favour of the home grower, who then might have some chance of success in an otherwise hopeless competition. It was of great importance to bear in mind, in this question, that the consumer would not be benefited one jot by the reduction of duty. So small was the quantity of hops employed in brewing of beer, that when the effect of the duty was taken in detail, the reduction of the duty could not have the effect of lowering the price in any perceptible degree—certainly not more than one farthing per gallon; while, on the other hand, there was the certainty of irreparable injury—the prospect of utter ruin to an interest which proved the source of abundant employment to the poor, and in which large sums were invested. He pressed these considerations humbly, but earnestly, on the attention of the Government.

SIR R. PEEL did not know that he could add anything to that which he stated when this subject was brought under consideration by the hon. Member for Sussex, in the year 1842. It was stated that the duty being 9*l.* per cwt. in 1842, it was reduced to 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. Alarms of the same nature as those expressed by the hon. Member for Kent were then expressed, that hops would then cease to be cultivated, and that the people would cease to be employed. But it appeared that, during the three years which had elapsed since 1842, only two cwt. of foreign hops had been brought in, while the duty which had been paid had not exceeded 10*l.* in the three kingdoms. He apprehended that the countries from which any formidable competition could be expected were very distant from this. Some hops, he believed, were grown in the United States; but they could not stand a long voyage, and were very much inferior to those grown in Kent. The produce of Kent, with the duty of 1*l.* per cwt., could enter into competition with the produce of America, or any foreign country. The introduction of hops into this country from any other had been hitherto a bad speculation, though sometimes the price was exorbitant. But if in dear years a moderate quantity were brought in, controlling the exorbitant prices, he (Sir R. Peel) thought it would be for the general advantage of the consumer, and he very much doubted if it would not be advantageous to the hop-growers themselves. He could not consent to repeal the excise duties on hops, and lose 170,000*l.* revenue, or 200,000*l.* in prosperous years. The question was, whether the hop-grower in this country, with a protection of 25*s.*, that is, deducting the 1*l.* excise duty from the 2*l.* 5*s.* protection duty, could not enter into competition with the foreign grower, except when the prices were so exorbitant as to render it for the interest of the consumer that they should have a foreign sup-

ply. He could not add anything to that which had been said upon what had been brought before them by the hon. Member for Sussex. He could not then consent to a reduction of the excise duties; and he could not think it desirable to maintain so high a duty as had been paid on foreign hops for the last three years, during which time only two cwt. had been imported, and 10*l.* duty had been paid.

Mr. FULLER said, to repeal the Corn Laws was bad enough, but to reduce the duty on hops was worse. It would ruin all the landowners, tenants, and labourers of Sussex and Kent, and it would throw thousands out of employ. It was impossible to estimate the distress that must arise. At least the excise duty ought to be reduced. Foreign hops would be sold here for less than they could be raised at in Sussex. English capital would soon be directed to the increased production of foreign hops. The repeal of the malt duty which pressed so heavily on the agriculturists and the country, would be a great benefit to the entire community; and the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) might recollect his own declaration, that the repeal of the malt tax must follow the repeal of the Corn Laws. The right hon. Baronet had represented that the hop-planters had made a great opposition to the last reduction of duty: it was true, and they had only agreed to the 4*l.* 10*s.* duty, on being assured that it should remain as a permanent and efficient protection.

Colonel AUSTIN concurred in what had been expressed by the hon. Members for Sussex and Kent. The growth of hops stood in peculiar need of protection; and that it was totally unnecessary to reduce that protection on account of the consumer, was evident from this, that the prices had been moderate on an average. The fallacy of the right hon. Baronet was in assuming, that because 4*l.* 10*s.* might be adequate protection, 2*l.* 5*s.* could be so. But, in truth, it was only a protection to the extent of 1*l.* 5*s.*, when 1*l.* per cwt. was deducted for the excise duty, to which our hop-growers were exclusively subjected. If the Government persisted in their resolution to reduce the duty, the most ruinous results must ensue in the hop-growing counties. He feared that no reasoning and no appeals would induce the right hon. Baronet to modify his proposition; but the right hon. Gentleman would teach the farmers of England a bitter lesson they would not readily forget—that they were to expect permanence in no measures but such as operated to their detriment and disadvantage. Such were the fruits of that free-trade mania with which the right hon. Baronet had been unhappily inoculated from the opposite side of the House. Had he any influence with the House, he would not hesitate to use it to induce them to increase the protective duty on hops, rather than diminish it. But, as he knew that the hop-growing was carried on in few counties, and that Members for other districts were not acquainted with the importance of the subject, he despaired of making any impression on the House, and could only express an earnest hope that, on some future occasion, they would be induced to reconsider a matter so momentous.

Mr. KNIGHT wished it to be understood, that when the hop-growers remonstrated with the Government on the last reduction of the duty, they did so under the impression that it was to be a reduction to 22*s.* instead of 4*l.* 10*s.*, with which latter sum they were satisfied, and expected that it would be maintained. It ought not to be forgotten that extra tithes and poor rates were charged on hop grounds to the extent of some 4*s.* or 5*s.* per cwt.; which was of course a proportionate drawback on the protective duty. Then again another circumstance operated very unfavourably to the English hop-grower: he had to pay the duty when his hops were dry; whereas the foreign producer could keep his hops in bond till they were required for consumption; meanwhile the English hop-grower lost the interest of his money. Since 1842 foreign hops (Belgian for instance) had been offered freely in the river at 2*l.* 2*s.* per cwt., free of duty; the hop dealers in London offered 6*l.* 6*s.* per cwt. including duty; and with a 4*l.* 10*s.* duty, the foreign hops were excluded; but with a 1*l.* 5*s.* duty, of course at that price they would come into competition with our own hops. He had been informed on good authority that hops could be brought from America at 2*l.* per cwt., and the freight would be only 2*s.* or 3*s.* more; so that they would be nearly on the same footing as the Belgian hops. The Report of the Commissioners of Excise Inquiry (Sir H. Parnell, Mr. Baring, and Mr. Wickham), all stanch free traders, recommended that, concurrently with the reduction of the import duty, there should be a repeal of the excise duty. The average price of British hops had been 5*l.* 9*s.*

per cwt.—not at all a high price—whereas foreign hops could be sold for 4*l.* 7*s.* per cwt., inclusive of the 2*l.* 5*s.* duty now proposed. He understood that the proposed alteration in the law of settlement in the hop districts was to be retrospective instead of prospective. This would be felt as a very hard case in the hop-growing districts. Supposing the hop grounds were broken up, what would become of the poor people who had been located in those parishes? It was, in fact, like breaking up a manufacturing town, and leaving all the workmen to be maintained by the owners of the destroyed factories: the population was as much crowded together. He sincerely hoped that the right hon. Baronet would not throw prices so low as to prevent the English grower of hops continuing his cultivation. The right hon. Baronet had said, the precarious crop introduced a kind of gambling into agricultural pursuits. The hop-grower must have a certain capital to go on with in case of a bad year; and when they had districts in England where there were men of capital, and who were capable of carrying on the cultivation, he really did not see why they should be interfered with in their speculations. The question, then, was, should Government ruin those men, or should it not? There was another thing. In these hop districts a great quantity of coarse linen was consumed yearly in making hop bags, while the coals for drying amounted to at least 10,000 tons annually. He hoped the House would take this into consideration, and would either consent to let the foreigner pay a higher duty, equivalent to the excise duty on hops, or would take off the duty on hops altogether. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kent had clearly showed that a reduction would have no real effect in lowering the price to the consumer, and therefore it would be needless to touch upon that. He thought if the right hon. Baronet wished to give cheap beer to the people, he should take the duty off malt.

MR. ALDERMAN HUMPHERY thought the proposed reduction would be advantageous to the public, and he doubted the accuracy of the calculations which had been made by the hon. Member who had just sat down with respect to the average price of hops in England. He recollected one year, the year 1817, in which the price was as high as 38*l.* per cwt. He did not think it at all likely that the cost of carrying American hops to this country would not exceed four or five shillings per bag; nay, he held it to be quite impossible, for it cost as much to convey them from Canterbury and Maidstone to London. Even though many of the hop gardens were to be thrown out of cultivation, the consequences would not be very disastrous, for there was no description of ground which grew better wheat than that which had previously been cultivated under hops.

MR. A. J. B. HOPE said, he thought the present question had not been put strongly enough in favour of the hop-growers. Hop-growers were not merely agriculturists, but they were at once agriculturists and traders, and therefore might suffer the casualties which attend both the traders and the agriculturists. A bad crop of wheat or oats was a rarity; but the hop-grower could not insure himself from casualties even from one year to another. Formerly, they looked to a surplus of one year to supply the deficiency of another. They knew that high prohibitory duties would prevent foreign hops from coming in. The course of nature generally brought it round that good and bad harvests were just sufficient to make up in good years the deficiency of bad years, Any hop-grower having capital could sell his hops, because he was enabled to store it up to meet the demands of scarce years; but if the facility which Government gave at present were removed, that could not be the case in future. He thought there were peculiar circumstances to prove that hops ought to be treated with particular leniency, especially when they remembered that hop-growers paid the enormous excise duty of 2*d.* in the pound. They were also put to the annoyance of having an excise officer to stamp every bag of hops, and compelled to pay toll before it could be taken out of the store. When all this was considered, besides the uncertainties of time and season, he did think it was a very great hardship for the hop-growers of Kent to have their protection taken from them while an expensive and burdensome excise duty was still levied upon their produce. He thought that if there was to be free trade, there should be free trade between Maidstone and London. He understood there was at the present moment a large London brewer who had ordered a quantity of hops from America, which at once went to prove that they could be brought into England. The hop trade in Kent supported and provided food and sustenance for numbers of the labouring classes of that county. It had been said

that a great spirit of gambling was abroad; but if the excise duty were taken away, there would be none. The trade would then be carried on without any of that spirit of gambling which was now complained of. He thought that, considering hops were subject to a heavy excise duty, it demanded, if anything, a much greater protection.

Mr. FREWEN said, that the right hon. Baronet had alluded to the great profit which had been made by the hop-growers. It was very true that some large capitalists had made much money, but it was not the case generally speaking; for so great was the spirit of competition in this country, that the profit was lowered very considerably. The small hop-grower invariably lost money after a series of years, while the large grower made great profits. The year 1817 had been alluded to in the course of the evening; but there was a very great blight during that year, and therefore it ought not to be quoted as a precedent, as it was a very extraordinary year. Hops could not be grown, he was informed, under 40*l.* an acre, of which 12*l.* went to pay the wages of men, women, and children. He could assure the House that a large number of hop grounds would be thrown out of cultivation in consequence of this measure. The hop-grower, however, would not object to the protective duty being lessened, if the Government would at the same time take off a portion of the excise duty.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that he was very glad he gave way to the hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the House, as he had told them that although the system of protection amounted to a prohibition, yet the effect of it upon the hop-grower was such as to make hop grounds for the most part losing concerns. He thought no argument could be stronger than that, for attempting some change in the system which had proved so detrimental to small people engaged in the growth of that particular article. When the hon. Gentleman talked of a perfectly free trade in hops, he should consider what the proposition was before the House. The Government did not put the English hop-grower on the same footing as the foreigner, but it put double the duty upon the foreigner to what it did on the home grower. The hon. Member for Maidstone had said, that were they not deprived of their present advantages, they could hold their hops over against a deficiency; but was such a mode of gaining a profit what the Government ought to support, as fair to the consumer? The hon. Gentleman had also expressed great fear that we should have American hops introduced into this country; but on that head, he had been sufficiently answered by one of his own party. He wished the hon. Gentleman would mention the name of the large brewer who had sent to America for hops; because if his name were once known, he would undoubtedly lose all his custom. Much had been said against the excise duty. It had been said, that the foreign hops would not require to have the duty paid till they were taken out of bond, while the duty on home-grown hops must be paid when they were dried. Such was not the fact; the excise duty was not paid until a considerable time afterwards. He believed the excise duty was considered by many hop-growers to be a protection to them.

Lord G. BENTINCK said, that there were other gambling speculations going on in this country than gambling in hops. There was a little gambling going on in railway speculations just now; but he was not exactly of opinion that any trade ought to be put down because gamblers chose to speculate upon the honest pursuits of other persons. He apprehended that the hop-growers themselves were not the gamblers —it was the London speculators who were the gamblers. It had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the House heard from the hon. Member for Sussex that hop-growing had been a losing concern for some years past; but the right hon. Gentleman proposed a different remedy to that which he should propose. He should propose that the excise duty be taken off. He was glad to hear, in the early part of the evening, the strongest proof of the advantage of the abolishment of the excise duties. The abolition of the excise duties upon glass had brought a considerable reduction of outlay to the Government, by the employment of a less number of excise officers; and he thought they had a reasonable ground for supposing that one hundred excise officers might come off, and upwards of 10,000*l.* a year be saved, by abolishing the present hop duty. That would be a means of giving assistance to the hop-growers. A gentleman had called upon him that morning and assured him that in the year 1836, under the regulations of the Excise, he had paid 18*s.* 8*d.* a cwt. upon fifteen tons and a half of hops, which were grown in 1836, which

was a good year; the result was, he was obliged to hold his hops till 1840, when he was tired of holding them, and then he sold the hops, with that duty of 18*s.* 8*d.* paid upon them for 16*s.* It had been stated that in 1817 or 1818, hops were 38*l.* the cwt. Would they admit foreign-grown hops to remedy such disastrous effects as this? He wished to call the attention of the hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury bench to one thing. Suppose they were to throw the hop-grounds out of cultivation, what did the Government mean to do with the Tithe Commutation Act? He understood that while wheat land paid 7*s.* an acre towards the tithes, hop land paid 29*s.* He admitted that a duty of 4*l.* 10*s.* a cwt. was a higher duty than was required; but at the same time, he thought that duty reduced as it was now proposed to be reduced, was too small; but the forms of the House prevented him from proposing any intermediate duty; and, therefore, whilst he protested against his vote to-night being considered as a vote in favour of a duty which was almost prohibitory, yet he had no other option than to propose that that part of the Resolution be omitted.

The House divided on the Question, that Hops the cwt. 2*l.* 5*s.* stand part of the Resolution:—Ayes 91; Noes 44: Majority 47.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.	Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Aldam, W.	Ellis, W.
Baine, W.	Escott, B.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.	Etwall, R.
Barnard, E. G.	Fitzgerald, R. A.
Bernal, R.	Fitzroy, hon. H.
Blewitt, R. J.	Flower, Sir J.
Botfield, B.	Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.	Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Bowles, Adm.	Greene, T.
Brotherton, J.	Hanmer, Sir J.
Browne, hon. W.	Hatton, Capt.
Bruce, Lord E.	Heathcoat, J.
Busfeild, W.	Hindley, C.
Butler, hon. Col.	Howard, P. H.
Cardwell, E.	Hughes, W. B.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.	Hume, J.
Chichester, Lord J. L.	Humphery, Ald.
Childers, J. W.	Jermyn, Earl
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Jocelyn, Visct.
Cobden, R.	Kelly, Sir F.
Collett, J.	Kirk, P.
Collins, W.	Langston, J. H.
Corry, rt. hon. H.	Lockhart, A. E.
Cowper, hon. W. F.	M'Carthy, A.
Crawford, W. S.	Mangles, R. D.
Cripps, W.	Masterman, J.
Dalrymple, Capt.	Mitchell, T. A.
Dickinson, F. H.	Moffatt, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Molesworth, Sir W.
Dundas, Adm.	Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Ebrington, Visct.	Muntz, G. F.
Neville, R.	Thornely, T.
Osborne, R.	Trelawny, J. S.
Parker, J.	Trench, Sir F. W.
Pechell, Capt.	Tuffnell, H.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.	Vivian, J. H.
Peel, J.	Wakley, T.
Philips, J. R.	Warburton, H.
Phillpotts, J.	Wawn, J. T.
Plumridge, Capt.	White, S.
Seymour, Lord	Williams, W.
Somers, J. P.	Wood, Col. T.
Staunton, Sir G. T.	Yorke, H. R.
Stewart, J.	TELLERS.
Strutt, E.	Young, J.
Thesiger, Sir F.	Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Allix, J. P.	Hope, A.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.	Houldsworth, T.
Austen, Col.	Liddell, hon. H. T.
Baillie, W.	Lygon, hon. Gen.
Bankes, J.	Manners, Lord J.
Benett, J.	March, Earl of
Bennet, P.	Miles, W.
Bentinck, Lord J.	Newdegate, C. N.
Bentinck, Lord H.	O'Brien, A. S.
Beresford, Major	Packe, C. W.
Borthwick, P.	Palmer, G.
Brocklehurst, J.	Repton, G. W. J.
Buck, L. W.	Richards, R.
Deedes, W.	Rolleston, Col.
Disraeli, B.	Sheppard, T.
Dodd, G.	Sibthorp, Col.
Finch, G.	Spooner, R.
Frewen, C. H.	Stanley, E.
Fuller, A. E.	Thompson, Ald.
Gaskell, J. Milnes	Worcester, Marq. of
Granby, Marq. of	
Halford, Sir H.	TELLERS.
Hall, Col.	Plumptre, J.
Hodgson, R.	Knight, F. W.

On the article Leather,

MR. KNIGHT said, that with respect to boots and shoes, he understood that great distress had ensued among the boot and shoemakers, consequent upon the last reduction in the Tariff affecting these articles. He knew that many houses in London, which had paid 500*l.* a week wages, had shifted their establishments to Boulogne. One of these houses had exported a great number of shoes and boots. He was of opinion that the reductions would not only injure the trades which they affected in the metropolis, but press with still greater severity on the inhabitants of the country towns and hamlets. He thought that the electors of Stafford had made a bad bargain for themselves by the recent election. He would not divide the House on the question.

On the Question that "Platting of Straw the lb., 5*s.*,"

MR. REPTON regretted that the right hon. Baronet had made this article the subject of still further reduction. The right hon. Baronet said, he regretted that he had not in the Tariff of 1842 proposed a

still lower rate of duty; but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman had any reason for regret, except that he had reduced the duty at all. Before 1842, the duty was 10*s.*; but it had by that measure been reduced to 7*s.* 6*d.* The House might not perhaps be aware that there were from 30,000 to 40,000 people employed in the manufacture of straw plait in the counties of Hertford, Essex, Buckingham, and Bedford. It appeared to him that one of the great advantages derived by those employed in that business was, that they were able to plait the straw in their own homes. Many children and girls were employed under the eyes of their own parents. In Tuscany a particular sort of grass was cultivated for this purpose, which he was told did not grow in this country. He had himself seen it growing near Florence. From inquiries made he was led to believe there were three kinds of plait—one was of a very fine nature; the second fine, but less so than the first; and the third of a coarser sort. It was only concerning the two former kinds that apprehensions were entertained. Fine straw was of great use to the retailers in London; but that particularly fine quality was used entirely by the upper classes. He put it to the House, if it were not a hard case that the poor operatives should suffer, to make this kind of plait somewhat cheaper. The people of this country would find it impossible to compete with those of the north of Italy. The article, as he had already said, was exclusively used by the upper classes, and he was sorry to say that his countrywomen gave it the preference over the produce of their own country; but as it was, he thought that when these ladies would wear so fine an article, they ought to be made to pay for it. Much had been said about improving the condition of the lower classes; but he thought reduced wages, that would follow from this measure, was a bad step towards it. He thought it would operate injuriously upon the poor women and children employed in this trade. It must be known that plait was an article of which a great quantity could be wrapped in very small bundles; and that, consequently, the freightage was trifling. He would be glad to know the number of convictions for smuggling this straw plait, for great smuggling of this article had, in 1842, been urged as one of the reasons for lowering the duty.

Sir G. CLERK was sorry if any injury had been done to the straw-plait manufacturers by the measure of 1842. At that time the duty was 17*s.* 6*d.* [Mr. Repton: Ten shillings.] No; 17*s.* 6*d.*, and that, too, be it recollected, upon a guinea's worth of the article. It was, in 1842, reduced to a duty of 7*s.* 6*d.*; and they now proposed to reduce it to 5*s.*; still leaving a protection of 20 per cent upon an article which could be, and had been, smuggled with the greatest facility. Since the reduction of 1842, he was proud to say the straw-plait workers had introduced such improvements in the plaiting of the article, as to be enabled to produce a superior quality; so that there was no ground for the apprehension entertained by the Member.

Question agreed to.

On the Question, that all the articles included under the head Silk Manufactures stand part of the Question,

Mr. BANKES said, he would propose the omission of items upon which it was proposed to reduce the duty to a very large extent. In doing so he would meet the challenge of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, who challenged any one to show that any material interest had been injured by the lowering of duty for any length of time. The right hon. Baronet assumed, not only that no interest had been injured, but that all had been benefited, either immediately or within a very short period of the time when such an alteration was made. He should have felt some hesitation in taking up a subject on which he could not pretend to any practical knowledge or information, neither could he say it was one in which his constituents were especially interested; but he felt for the many weavers whose interests would be injured by the reduction of duties, and he had obtained a degree of information which reached to a certain period, was full and accurate, and of an authority that could not be disputed. Within six years of the alteration made in the silk trade by Mr. Huskisson, circumstances had occurred which, so far from showing any improvement, evinced that inconvenience and suffering had been the result—in fact so much so that Parliament, then under the control of a Whig Government, felt itself constrained to yield to the demands of those engaged in that trade, and appoint a Committee to inquire into the subject. In 1832 a Committee was appointed, of which he was a Member. There were upon it twenty-three Members of the House of Commons, of whom as far as he was aware, only seven were now in the House. The right hon. Baronet at

the head of the Government was a Member of that Committee; but, so far as his recollection extended, attended it very seldom. He (Mr. Bankes) had since thought that if the right hon. Baronet had attended it more frequently, he would not have thrown out the challenge he had given, because he must have felt that the mass of evidence there tendered was entirely opposite to his present views. The hon. Member for Montrose was also a Member of the Committee, and a constant attendant at the sittings; and that hon. Member would not dispute the authority of the evidence it received. The sittings of the Committee extended over a period of five months, from March until August. It was appointed—

"To examine into the present state of the silk trade, and to inquire what effects had been produced by the changes in the laws relating to the silk trade, since 1824, and whether any legislative measure could be devised compatible with the general interest of the country, which would have the effect of promoting it; at the same time to prevent smuggling in silk manufacture, and to report thereon to the House."

The Committee sat almost incessantly, and only closed its labours with the Session. The Report of the Committee was only laid on the Table the last day of the Session, and was in these words:—

"Your Committee regret that they are unable to make any general or full report on several matters committed to their consideration; but the various interests included, and the extent of the subject brought before the Committee, as well as the great number of witnesses they had to examine, and the knowledge that many others still remain to be examined, compel us at this late period of the Session only to lay the evidence taken before the House."

Had he (Mr. Bankes) been a Member of the ensuing Parliament, he would certainly have moved for the re-appointment of the Committee; but he had not been in that House for several years after. When the Committee drew near to a close, the late Sir Fowell Buxton, who was one of its Members, prepared a Resolution, which he submitted to the Committee as a foundation for its Report. He had the honour of assisting him, and Alderman Waithman also took part in preparing it. A day was fixed upon which this Resolution was to be discussed. When the day came, one of the Members, the then Member for Coventry, as he believed (Sir H. Bulwer), did not attend, from illness or some other cause. The consequence was, that the Members of the Committee were divided equally for and against the Resolution. The chairman (Mr. Sanford) was known to be in favour of the views of the supporters of the Resolution, and his casting vote would have decided it in their favour. Before the division took place, however, a Member of the Committee was sent for, who had never been at any previous sitting (Sir Henry Parnell), and he voted against them. This was the reason why no other than the meagre Report which they saw on the Table had been produced, and which was sufficient to assure them that no complete inquiry had taken place; but a mass of facts had been recorded which indisputably proved that the complaints of the petitioners were well founded, and that the silk trade had experienced severe depression from the measures introduced by Mr. Huskisson. There might be still a very large capital engaged in the manufacture of silk; but it had been proved, and he would forthwith direct their attention to the evidence, that the lowering of the duty had had the effect of lessening the wages of the operatives engaged in that trade more than half—that, from a state of comparative ease and comfort—he had almost said indulgence, in which they were before the change was made—they had been thrown into fearful and general distress during the six years that intervened between the passing of the measure and the appointment of the Committee. The hon. Member then proceeded to read extracts from the evidence given before the Committee in question. Mr. William Brunskell after one or two observations made by him, was questioned as follows:—

"How do you think the measure has affected the ribbon trade?—I think great distress has taken place in the ribbon trade from foreign competition.

"Do you consider that smuggling has increased in this period as compared with the period prior to 1826?—Amazingly.

"Are you aware of any manufacturers who thought well of the scheme when first proposed, and who have since altered their opinion?—Yes. I have reason to think there are several, and I will name them if the Committee wish (witness did name them).

"What difference is there between the wages of the English and the foreign workman?—I should think the English workman has, generally speaking, very nearly double.

"Are you not aware that a great number of weavers in Spitalfields are thrown out of employment by the same article being manufactured in Manchester?—I am not aware of that.

"Is it not a fact, that taking the whole of the goods now made in Spitalfields, that a quality is made much better than it was a few years ago?—

I should say not; I think they made better goods ten years ago than they make now.

"You state that wages in Spitalfields have been reduced 50 per cent since 1826?—Yes; from 40 to 50 per cent.

"Do you attribute that to the introduction of goods from France.—Yes; mainly I do.

There would be found in another part of the Report, an estimate of the average weekly earnings of weavers in full employment, in the plain ribbon trade, including satins and sarsenets. From the evidence of Mr. Benjamin Poole, it appeared that in 1815 the wages was 18*s.* 1½*d.* per week; in 1816, 17*s.*; in 1818, 14*s.* 6*d.*; in 1819, 18*s.* 1½*d.* again; in 1824, 17*s.*; in 1826, the year after the reduction, 14*s.*; in 1829, three years after the alteration, they fell to 10*s.* 10*d.*, from 18*s.* 1½*d.* He also found in that Report an account of the money actually paid for poor rates in Coventry—the parish of Coventry, for the support of permanent casual poor. At Lady-day, 1824, the amount paid for poor rate in that parish for permanent and casual poor, was 1,307*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.* In 1830, six years after, the poor rate rose to 2,192*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* Then, as regarded the evidence of Mr. Brocklehurst, he gave a statement respecting Macclesfield; he mentioned the number of spindles in employ, which were, in 1824, 276,000, and 10,000 people employed; in 1828, four years after, and two years after the alteration of duty, the number of working spindles in that town was reduced from 276,000 to 159,000—whilst the people, who in 1824 were 10,000, were reduced to 5,254. But in the year 1831, a reduction still more remarkable occurred: the number of spindles was reduced to 120,000, and the people employed to 3,000, having been 10,000 in 1824. Then as to wages. In 1824, the wages of the able man in this trade was 18*s.* a week, the wages of young men 14*s.*, of young women 12*s.* a week, of children from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* In 1828, four years after, the wages of able men, which had been 18*s.*, were reduced to 8*s.* 6*d.*; the wages of young men, which had been 14*s.*, were reduced to 7*s.* 3*d.*; the wages of women, which had been 12*s.*, were reduced to 6*s.*; the wages of children, which had been from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.*, were reduced to 3*s.* 6*d.* and 1*s.* 9*d.* But in 1831, still further reductions took place, for the wages of able men were reduced to 4*s.* 7*d.* which had been 18*s.*, the wages of young men to 4*s.*, of women to 3*s.*, of children to 1*s.* Then let them take the poor rates of Macclesfield. In 1824, the gross expenditure of poor rates was 4,201*l.* 18*s.*; in 1829, five years after the poor rate was more than doubled—it amounted to 8,670*l.* Then let them take the number of families receiving relief. In 1825, there were fifty-six families in that town receiving relief; in 1831, 511. Now, could any one withstand such facts as these? Was he to be told now, even supposing the statement was true, which he could prove it was not, that it was true the silk weavers did suffer for five or six years, but that they had now recovered? That would not meet his case. He had answered the challenge which had been thrown out, to produce a single case where mischief had resulted from the reduction of protection; and he had shown that great and enormous mischief had been the result of a rash alteration in those duties—an alteration of the effect of which the House was warned, but which being sanctioned by the great name of Mr. Huskisson, was carried as triumphantly as any of those alterations which the House was now achieving. He would not say but the great manufacturers might be ready to try this great experiment, and to share in the glory which was anticipated from the new system, and which was to find imitators in every part of the world. But they could afford to stand the risk of five or six years of depreciation, and sustain the disadvantage which unrestricted competition would cause them; but he begged the House to remember that that which was a mere temporary disadvantage to them, was ruin to the poorer classes. The House could not re-establish them—it could not indemnify them for the injury which was brought upon them. He thought, therefore, they ought to pause, and give the operatives time to recover from the injuries which had already been inflicted upon them. The manufacturers would no doubt speak for themselves—some of them were present in the House; but he should be surprised, indeed, if any of them would rise and tell him that the operatives were in favour of this change, or that they did not look forward with great and reasonable dread to the farther mischief which these measures were likely to bring upon them. But it might be said, it was true, the Spitalfields weavers were ruined; but what business had they to settle there? The hon. Member for Montrose said that. [Mr. HUME: No, no.] The hon. Member denied it, but he had heard the hon. Member say something very like that, namely,

that the weavers had no business to settle there. Others said, "True, the business had disappeared from Spitalfields, but it had risen in other parts of the country." Then, where was it? He had not been able to discover it in other parts of the country. It was not the same sort of trade it was—not the trade which gave the high wages—it was not the trade which wrought the valuable kind of manufactures, which branch of trade alone gave the high wages; and when he was met, as he had no doubt he would be, with returns from the Board of Trade, showing a great increase in the weight and bulk of the silk exported, he begged to say that would not meet his argument in regard to wages—it rather confirmed his apprehensions, that they had lost the manufacture of those fine and valuable fabrics which were bought by the rich, till, in consequence of the change they were enabled to buy them from foreigners; which were bought by the rich who could afford to pay high prices: and for the fabrication of which the master manufacturers were enabled to pay high wages. Those fabrics ought to have been encouraged, and not to have been surrendered in despair of being able to compete with the taste or with the dyes of France. At the very moment the change took place, they were in the act of surmounting these obstacles; they were discovering the means of being able to compete with foreigners both with respect to the dyes and to taste; so much so, that it was stated before the Committee that a fabric was seized at the Custom-house as French, which was afterwards proved to be an English one. The quantity of silk now manufactured might be as much as before; but what he contended was, that those expensive fabrics which alone gave high wages, were now given up in a great measure. Therefore, when it was said that the persons formerly employed in Spitalfields had now gone to Manchester and Nottingham, he said it was not to work those fine and beautiful fabrics. They were engaged in the manufacture of silk it was true; but it was silk of an inferior nature—what was called the husks and knubs. [*Cheers.*] Hon. Members cheered him. Was it a matter of indifference to the operatives? did they think what wages they got? That was his case. It was nothing to prove to him that the same number of people were employed who would have been employed under other circumstances. His case was, that great numbers of them were employed at wages so low as hardly to provide sufficient subsistence for themselves and their families. It required no intimacy with the feeling of the working classes to know that they were not agreeable to the proposed change. Reports of meetings had been published in the public journals: one of these was held at Manchester, and the report described it as numerous and enthusiastic. Mr. Cann was unanimously called to the chair; and he stated that the proposed Tariff would have the effect of lowering their present low rate of wages. Then the meeting was addressed by Mr. Bennet, who declared to the meeting—

"That he had been a weaver for fifty-seven years, and he found by bitter experience that every advance towards free trade only lowered their wages; he would ask who they were who were now the leaders of free trade? Not the manufacturers, but great capitalists who could buy goods anywhere, and would buy them where they could get them the cheapest, never caring about the labourer. He would ask who were Cobden and Bright? Two men who had amassed large fortunes by getting work done cheap, and only wanted the repeal of the Corn Laws for their own benefit. But he was sure that neither the weavers, nor, in fact, any body of working men, when the matter was properly explained to them, would be led away by the cry of cheap bread. But then Mr. Cobden said bread would not fall much in this country, but would rise on the contrary abroad; but the manufacturers there would not raise their workmen's wages any more than our manufacturers, because their food was dearer; and thus we should make the poor there worse off than they were at present, and do no good to ourselves. For our manufacturers and capitalists took care, when bread was cheap, to make that an excuse to lower wages; but they also took care, when food was dear, not to raise them. Huskisson's measures had brought ruin upon numbers of poor families, and Sir Robert's, he was sure, would prove worse still.

"Mr. Jones said he quite agreed with the previous speaker, and he thought the best thing they could do was to petition against the measure, because he was sure that they could not compete with the French unless we had taxation as low, and wages still lower.

"Mr. Field then moved the following Resolution:—'Resolved that we, the weavers of Manchester, in public meeting assembled, are of opinion that the reduction of duties upon foreign silks will be a very great injury to the silk trade of this country; and we, therefore, resolve to oppose it by every legal and constitutional means.' He (Mr. Field) could also recollect the vast amount of misery which Huskisson's measure had inflicted on the silk trade of this country, and the misery and starvation which that measure had brought upon the weavers generally. It had had the effect of lowering their wages one-half, and Peel's measure would, if passed, do the same; and he was sure it would benefit no class of persons but the fundholder, the large capitalist, and the fixed

annuitant. It was very well for such men as Mr. Hume to advocate low wages, just because his lady would get a silk dress about sixpence cheaper, or perhaps, a new bonnet threepence cheaper. The fact was, that the capitalist and large manufacturers were not content with taking their sweat, but they had taken their flesh, and now they wanted to open their bones and suck the marrow out. He concluded by proposing the Resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Cavenner.

"Mr. Clough then moved, 'that a petition be presented to both Houses of Parliament, against the passing of Sir Robert Peel's measure, and instead of it to grant protection for labour to the working classes.'"

There was another meeting held in a different place on the same day. It appeared that these meetings were perfectly open; and yet the Resolutions were carried without one dissentient voice. Now, if he found that even in Manchester itself such language was openly held, could he doubt that the working classes generally were averse to the change? True, he found no persons of wealth or consideration taking part in these meetings; but that was no reason why the House should disregard them. They were meetings of the working classes, who were awake to the danger to which they were exposed by these rash experiments. They were persons who had felt the evils; and, therefore they were alive to this fresh attack. It was true that other trades and occupations had not shown the same feeling, because, happily, they had not hitherto felt the same degree of injury. Now, he had been told that the Spitalfields weavers had gone to Manchester: well, he had traced them to Manchester, and this was the wretched condition in which he found them, that they were scarcely able at present to provide food for themselves and their families, and reasonably anticipating that if this fresh change were made, their condition would become worse than ever. But it was very singular that in few parts of the kingdom did they hear much of this class of persons. His attention had been drawn incidentally to this subject, by looking over the Report of one of the Inspectors of Factories, whose attention was necessarily directed to the subject of mills and factories through the kingdom. In looking through the Report of Mr. Saunders for the year 1845, whose districts comprehended the counties of Derby, Hertford, Kent, Lancaster, Leicester, Nottingham, Somerset, Wilts, and York, he found this result, that from comparing the number of mills in October, 1838, with those in January, 1845, there were in the former period, of cotton, 204 mills, in the latter period, 263 mills; being an increase of 59. Of wool, in the former period, there were 566 mills, in the latter period, 655; being an increase of 89 mills: of worsted fabrics, in the former period, there were 388 mills, in the latter 438, increase 50: of flax mills, in the former period, 59 mills, in the latter 65; increase 6; and then came silk, which employed in the former period 69 mills, and in the latter 63; being the only trade in which there had been a decrease. He found also that the total number of children under his observation in Lancashire was 13,000, while the children employed in the silk trade was only 800. Therefore, looking to this extensive district of the country, he did not find that the silk trade, which had been expelled from London by these experiments, had been largely established in any other part of the kingdom. He did not dispute that there were many manufactures which were called silk, but which were not formerly thought worthy of that name—manufactures where silk was mixed with cotton, worsted, and other articles; but he begged again that the House would bear in mind that it was the question of wages he was arguing. There was a paper which had been largely circulated, and from which, therefore, he would quote but little; but there were a few particulars which he begged to lay before the House as a fair summary of his case, and as containing matter well deserving their attention. It appeared, then, that the wages of the silk weaver were less by one-half now than they were in 1824: he thought the evidence he had quoted had already established that fact. He trusted he should hear in the course of the debate, that, in many parts of the kingdom, the higher rates of wages were resumed; for he did not deny that the manufacturers now could and did carry on the higher fabrics, but not to the same extensive degree as before; they had not increased in the same proportion as they would have done if protection had not been withdrawn; and therefore he had a right to assume that a large proportion of those who were now earning small wages would have been employed in a more profitable way, if these alterations had not been made. The second statement contained in the paper to which he had referred was, that the annual value of the silk manufactured in England was less by 2,000,000*l.* or 3,000,000*l.* sterling than it was in 1824. Here again they had to deal with quality, not with quantity, be-

cause the exports of silk to France, which were so much spoken of, consisted of coarse yarns for fringes, &c., while the imports from France consisted of the finest fabrics, so that the average value of English silk exported to France was 7*s.* 6*d.* per lb., while the average value of the French silk imported to England was 56*s.* per lb., which marked the difference in the quality of the silk and in the value of the labour. The declared value of the English exports of silk into France was somewhere above 156,000*l.*, while the declared value of the French imports into England was above 1,000,000 sterling. He might state that a portion of his constituents were interested in the silk trade; and when he had on a former occasion opposed the reduction of the duty on thrown silk, and urged the case of his constituents upon the right hon. Baronet, he received for answer that his was one of the counties which had been beaten out of their manufactures by the discovery of new machinery; and, above all, by the discovery of steam. Now, he could assure the right hon. Baronet, that the manufacture of thrown silk could be quite as well carried on by water power as by steam. But the fact was, in consequence of the reduction in the duties, where there had been two large establishments employing a great number of hands, there was now only one establishment, the hands were considerably reduced, and the rates of wages, though there was every disposition on the part of the masters to pay liberally, were still in no degree so high as they had been before. Thus the population of that district had to a large extent been thrown out of work, particularly young females were deprived of employment which was profitable to them, and in no degree injurious to the health; for it was a singular fact, that the health suffered less in the silk than in any other manufacture. For those reasons, in addition to others, he trusted that the case of those persons would meet with the sympathy of the House. He did not wish to mix it up with other questions. He should prove an interested and unworthy advocate, if he were to damage the cause of these unfortunate persons by mixing it up with any other question. Vote as they would upon other questions—state if they chose that the case of the agricultural labourer rested on a different footing; but let them not in their wish to carry the Corn Laws, do injustice to this particular class of persons who had already suffered so severely from the Tariff, and who, if they were now in a prosperous state, were but recovering from the depression to which former experiments had reduced them. If it could be shown that they were now in a flourishing state, he said, leave them so; and for years to come let them enjoy that protection to which they were so much entitled. Those richer fabrics which afforded the high prices, could only be purchased by the wealthy. They were the only persons who could complain of the high prices; and he trusted that class would let it be a part of their privileges—a part of their pride—if they were to adorn their palaces with hangings of these fabrics, that in these expensive articles of dress and of furniture, they were contributing to the high wages of the operative classes. He would certainly divide on this subject; because, as had been said, it involved other interests; for the questions of dress and millinery related to the same subject—they all related to the pride and the pleasure of the rich. They might, by the abolition of the Corn Laws lower the amount of wealth of the nobles of the land; but depend upon it, it would still be their pride and their happiness to contribute to the just remuneration of the working classes. He concluded by moving the omission of all articles in the Tariff which included silk.

MR. WYNN ELLIS said he had been a Member of the Committee of 1833, to which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bankes) had referred, and that he had taken the part of the operatives in the silk trade during that investigation. He gave the hon. Member credit for sincerity; but he begged to remind him that the question was not whether we could return to the old system of prohibition. That was quite impossible. It was assumed that if we did, the former rate of wages might still be obtained; but he apprehended no such result would follow, the competition for employment being too great. The hon. Gentleman said he did not know what had become of the silk trade that had left Spitalfields; and he asked where it was gone? He was sorry to say that since 1832 the number of parties engaged in the silk trade in Spitalfields had been reduced from 14,000 to 9,000. It was also assumed, and it was quite true, that if you admitted the silks of France, the whole of the very superior fabrics would come from that country. That was the case undoubtedly; and it would be so for some time yet, because in France there was a richer description of

silk grown than reached this country, all of which they consumed. He had been in the silk trade thirty-five years, and he could assure the House that the best description of silks now imported from France had never, at any time, been manufactured in Spitalfields, although there had been a great improvement in the manufacture of this country, and although in operative skill the workmen of Spitalfields were equal to the execution of anything that could be produced in France. He would, however, revert to one point he had omitted, and give the House an idea of what had become of the silk trade. Ribbons formerly made in Coventry were now manufactured in Derby; large houses had been established at Manchester, Battersea, and Congleton. At Coventry they now made a description of goods hardly known there twenty years ago—gauze ribbons. Broad silks were manufactured at Leigh, Middleton, Manchester, and other places. With regard to the prices at which these goods could be imported from France, he had a return in his hands from Lyons, from which he was satisfied that, weight for weight, excluding gauzes, our goods were quite as cheap as those manufactured in France. There was little to fear from competition. Let our inferiority be no longer proclaimed, but let us, by sound legislation, induce men of enterprise, capital, and energy, to embark in the trade, and it would soon be found that Spitalfields would not only rival, but be superior to, the manufactures of France. Broad silks—bandanas for instance—were made in large quantities by the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Brocklehurst), exceeding in quality and cheapness those of France, so much so that they were printed and exported to a very great extent to France and other parts of the Continent.

Mr. BROCKLEHURST begged to interrupt the hon. Member. The article of bandanas were manufactured in India, printed in this country, and then sent to France. They were not the manufacture of Macclesfield.

Mr. W. ELLIS assured the hon. Member that Indian bandanas were not only printed in this country, but also that his (Mr. Brocklehurst's) own cloths were printed, and then sent into France, through Belgium. He admitted that there had been a diminution in the wages of the operatives within the last few years; but that, he contended, would have occurred had the system of protection been continued. If these duties were removed, he felt convinced that men of capital would embark their money in the silk trade, which would thus be placed on a systematic footing, the same as regulated the cotton trade. He believed that in a few years these duties would be removed altogether, and he knew that one of the most intelligent manufacturers of Spitalfields had provided for the anticipated change by sending his sons to the manufacturing towns of France.

Mr. BROCKLEHURST said, the hon. Member who had just sat down spoke of the sons of a manufacturer being sent abroad for the purpose of being taught the modes of conducting the silk trade in France; and to his (Mr. Brocklehurst's) apprehension, by this fact the weakness of the argument of the hon. Member was proved. What would become of the weavers of Spitalfields until these persons returned with new notions of trade? The hon. Gentleman spoke largely of broad silks, but took a very narrow view of the subject. The hon. Gentleman also spoke of Spitalfields being under the direction of "brokers;" but he should have said "wholesale dealers," who, in fact, addressed language of this description to the manufacturers—"These are our prices: if you like them, take them; but if you do not choose to accept, we shall send our travellers to France, and supply ourselves from that country." In the town of Macclesfield was a population of 40,000 to 50,000 persons, and it was his duty to defend them on all occasions from attacks made against them. It might be argued by some that if one particular employment was destroyed, the operatives of that employment might resort to theirs. That principle, however, he disregarded. It was not possible shoemakers could turn themselves into milliners, or other trades make equally strange metamorphoses. The hon. Member for Leicester said, he wished men of capital would enter the silk trade, though he (Mr. Brocklehurst) did not observe the hon. Member showed why they had hitherto kept away. He supposed, however, he wished an inference to be drawn that protection drove them from that trade. If such was the intended inference, he could not admit its truth. He had been entrusted with a petition to present to that House, signed by a large proportion of the manufacturing population of Macclesfield, which clearly evinced the feeling of the operatives upon the subject. These petitioners stated, that they perceived with deep regret that

the remission of the silk duties in 1824, and the admission of foreign silk goods in 1826, had been regarded as successful measures, when their effects, as the petitioners stated, had been most disastrous to them—thousands of them having been thrown out of work, and been compelled to depend upon the public kitchen for their support; not the operatives only, but many of the small manufacturers had in consequence been ruined. The petitioners regarded the silk trade as one which ought to be preserved, in case of any depression in the cotton trade; and they therefore prayed such favourable consideration from the House as that branch of business might be thought worthy of at their hands. His hon. Friend had laid great stress upon the circumstance of our exporting silk to France; but the fact was, that whilst we exported 20,000*l.* worth of silk goods, we imported from France 150,000*l.* worth. So much for the boasted reciprocity. The hon. Member proceeded to quote at some length from Mr. Deacon Hume's evidence before the Committee on the Silk Trade, in 1832, in support of the views which he had entertained. It was said that the effect of maintaining the duties was to give encouragement to smuggling; but it was quite possible to prevent smuggling, unless it took place with the connivance of the officers. It was quite evident, from the returns which had been laid on the Table of the House, that the Government had not obtained as great an amount of duty under the existing system as they would have obtained under the former system.

Sir G. CLERK said, that the hon. Member for Dorsetshire had, at the commencement of his speech, promised to show that the silk trade was a case in which not only temporary but permanent injury had been inflicted, by the alterations in our fiscal system which had taken place in 1824 and 1825. The hon. Member had entirely rested his statement on the evidence taken before the Select Committee of 1832, of which he was a Member; and the hon. Member wished to make it appear that the Government of that day had felt such doubts as to the expediency of retaining the new system which had been introduced two years previously, that they willingly consented to inquiry. But the then Vice-President of the Board of Trade, the late Lord Sydenham, distinctly stated to the House that he went into the Committee, not entertaining the slightest doubt of the soundness of Mr. Huskisson's policy; without any intention of increasing the duty on silks, and still less of reverting to the exploded system of prohibition, but because he considered that the rates fixed in 1826 were too high, that they held out a temptation to the smuggler, and he made an addition to the instruction to the effect, that the Committee was to consider what steps could be taken for the prevention of smuggling. He admitted that several witnesses had made statements as to the distress among the operative silk weavers in consequence of the fall of wages. He did not deny that at particular seasons great distress did prevail in the silk trade, as in every other branch of our manufactures; but the hon. Member should have shown that such distress was peculiar to the silk manufactures, and also that it had arisen entirely since the alteration in the duty. The hon. Member should have referred to the evidence which had been taken before Committees at former periods, and the statements then made as to the state of the silk trade while enjoying the highest degree of protection. Had the hon. Member read the statement of Sir Fowel Buxton, made at the Mansion-house in 1816, when a meeting was called to take into consideration the distressed state of silk weavers? Why, the distress of 1841 was nothing as compared to the distress of 1816, when the people were dying in the ditches about Bethnal Green. Neither was such distress confined to 1816. Sir Fowell Buxton referred to 1812, and the exertions rendered necessary on that occasion. Then in 1818, they had petitions from the silk weavers of Coventry, and a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the facts. The distress then was infinitely greater than in 1832, and statements were put forth that the best men were working 100 hours in the week, and only obtaining *5s. 9d.* wages. Therefore, when the hon. Member quoted particular years, he ought to admit that the distress to which he alluded had not been caused by the alteration of the duties in 1826, seeing that greater distress than had occurred subsequent to the alteration had previously taken place under all the supposed advantages of monopoly. The misfortune of the silk trade had always been that it was a manufacture of an article of luxury, and therefore liable to be affected by the wildest caprices of fashion. Sometimes the operatives were in full employment at high wages, at others they were completely destitute of employment and the means of subsistence. This

state of things was aggravated also by absurd regulations, because by the Spitalfields' Act it was impossible to give higher or lower wages than was fixed by the Act. The manufacturer was prevented under a heavy penalty from offering wages higher or lower than such as he found fixed in a certain table. What was the consequence? The manufacturer, who under other circumstances might continue to employ the men in slack seasons at lower wages, was obliged to discontinue employment altogether; and the men were at once reduced to starvation, while the trade was ultimately driven from Spitalfields to Macclesfield and Manchester, were they were not exposed to the consequences of such absurd restrictions. In 1826 the language was, "Give us a few years to get out of the trade, as your changes will destroy it;" but the trade had been in a more flourishing condition since than before. What were the tests by which the state of a trade was to be ascertained? If they found that the importation of the raw material used in the manufacture, and that the export of the manufactured article, had increased, was not that a proof of extension? Silk was now no longer considered a luxury, to be exclusively engrossed by the rich, but was extensively used by the middle and even the humbler classes; and it was clear that if the duty had not been reduced, that would not have taken place. If they wished to discourage the use of silk goods, they could not adopt a better means than by reintroducing the system which had been in force previous to 1824. By that system a duty was imposed on the raw material, and a minimum of wages was fixed, so that at some periods enormous profits were realized, while at others complete destitution prevailed. It was impossible for the trade to flourish under such restrictions; and, accordingly, he found, on referring to the returns made on the subject, that from 1765 to 1817—a period including the triennial period after the peace—that the silk trade had only doubled; whereas since 1817 up to the present time it had more than trebled. The hon. Member for Macclesfield had referred to printed papers to corroborate his assertion with regard to the exportation of the coarser descriptions of silk manufacture. It was true that we exported a quantity of silk yarn, certainly of an inferior description to the fine Italian yarns; but he found that of the whole quantity of raw silk imported only about five per cent was exported, and that the average value of such silk was not 7*s.* 6*d.* a lb., but between 60*s.* and 70*s.* a lb. The hon. Member for Leicester had stated, that we could not compete with France in the manufacture of lighter fabrics. He believed that there was no doubt that our silk manufactures were quite equal in texture, quality, and colour, to any that could be manufactured at Lyons, and that the only thing they were superior to us was in taste. He felt convinced, that the only way for them to get over that difficulty, was by entering upon a fair competition with the French manufacturers. The hon. Member said, that the silk trade had not increased to the same extent as the cotton trade. But the cotton trade had never been protected to the same extent as the silk trade, but in a great measure had been left to rest on its own energies. The hon. Gentleman had also referred to the subject of wages. Upon no subject was it more difficult to obtain accurate information. With regard to the silk trade, he believed that all, without exception, were paid by piece work; and nothing could be more erroneous than to compare the prices paid to a weaver for a particular piece of goods twenty years ago, and the price paid him at the present time; for the improvement made in looms enabled a workman to execute now a far greater quantity of work than he could do twenty years ago even with the assistance of a boy. From the evidence taken before the Committee of 1832, it appeared that up to that time not the slightest improvement had been made in the looms of Spitalfields, and that they were in the same state as those which had been introduced by the French refugees more than a century previous. On referring to the Report on the State of Trade he found it stated, that immediately after the reduction of the duty in 1824 a greater stimulus was given to the manufacture, and that, during 1824 and 1825, the number of mills or spindles were more than doubled. Since that time improvements had been made by which the same number of spindles performed double the work they did previously, and on that account there had not been any great addition to the number of mills. But the hon. Member for Dorsetshire had asked, "Where had the silk trade gone, as he could not find any new silk mills in the north?" Why, the moment the fetters were taken off that trade, in 1824, a very great stimulus took place, and, at Macclesfield, advertisements appeared, stating that new mills had been erected, and

that large numbers of hands were required; indeed, more mills were established than were required; for the improvement in the machinery was such that the mills were enabled to do double the work they did before; and, therefore, there had been no necessity for more mills; for the Report of Mr. Saunders, the Factory Commissioner, stated, that in 1843 the mill occupiers complained that they could not get hands enough, and that in Derby no fewer than 3,009 were employed. The Report went on further to say, that in March, 1844, four additional mills were set to work—that the total number of persons then employed in Derby amounted to 4,000 persons—and, that there was a difficulty experienced in obtaining a supply of hands, in consequence of the millowners showing a preference for those persons whose labour was more valuable from previous experience. It was, therefore, clear by this Report, that, whatever might have been the state of the silk trade fifteen years ago, that in the years 1843 and 1844 the millowners could not procure enough of hands to meet the demand for their manufactures. Having thus referred to the past and present state of the silk trade, he confessed he was at a loss to know where he was to look for evidence to prove that the silk trade was at this moment depressed. Trade had of late years, beyond all question, considerably increased; for since the reduction upon thrown silk, four times the quantity of raw silk had been manufactured; and, consequently, an increased number of persons had been employed. The hon. Members for Dorset and Macclesfield had maintained that, because silk was a luxury, and because it was extensively used in its manufactured state by the wealthy, it ought to be subject to a high duty, in order that a large revenue might be derived from it. He admitted that silk in its manufactured state was in a great part consumed by the wealthier classes; but he did not infer from that fact that the revenue would be benefited by the imposition of a high duty. Under the former system an *ad valorem* duty of from 25 to 30 per cent had been charged upon some articles, while upon others 40 and even 50 per cent had been charged; but the imposition of those heavy duties failed to increase materially the revenue, while it encouraged smuggling, and tended to the evasion of the duty. It was his impression that the proposed reduced duty would produce a larger amount of revenue than had hitherto been obtained, because the imports would be greater, and an effective check would be put upon the contraband trade. He was sure that the Coventry and Macclesfield silk weavers would not apprehend any injury from an *ad valorem* duty of 15 per cent; but that, on the contrary, the impetus which their trade would receive from a relaxation of the prohibitory law would have the effect of making that important branch of industry more prosperous than it had hitherto been. The House had been told, that since the year 1826 the silk trade had been injured by the reduction of duties that had already taken place; but this was not so, for upon the best authorities it had been proved that the silk trade was at present in a more flourishing condition than it had been for many years. Under those circumstances, he trusted the House would, by a large majority, support the Resolution proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. NEWDEGATE remarked that the impression among those connected with the silk trade seemed to be that of deep regret that the Government felt it necessary to propose a reduction of duty upon foreign silks. Such were the expressions of the petitions presented from Coventry, even when in favour of free trade. The right hon. Baronet (Sir George Clerk) had quarrelled with the hon. Member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Bankes), because he quoted from the evidence taken before the Select Committee in 1842; but in his opinion the present discussion savoured very much of the spirit of that Committee; and he thought that the conduct of Sir Henry Parnell, who voted on the Report of that Committee without hearing the evidence, was strictly analogous to the present conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers. He did not think that the right hon. Baronet had proved that an increase of wages had taken place since the relaxation of duty. In his opinion, so far from there being an increase, there had been a very considerable reduction. How could those who were anxious for the relaxation of prohibitory duties improve the state of the silk weaver, by removing the slight protection that was at present extended to his industry, when their French competitors set the fashions which ruled the trade, and had almost at their doors the raw material? But they said the trade was at present in a flourishing condition. He would grant that; and in doing so would ask whether there could be any better argument for proving that protection ought to be continued?

The hon. Member for Leicester had remarked, that in 1824 he advocated protection for silk, because the Corn Laws were then in existence; but as they were to be removed, and other duties on articles of food were also to be removed, there would be a fairer competition amongst manufacturers, who would prosper in consequence. That was certainly a characteristic argument. Did it not prove that the hon. Member looked to the repeal of the provision laws as a means for reducing wages? He (Mr. Newdegate) had no doubt that object had great weight with master manufacturers, and that they would not be slow in the reduction of wages. He admitted that he felt roused when he heard hon. Gentlemen maintain that the silk weavers would not be affected by the reduction of duty upon foreign silk manufactures. He lived among them, and had continual opportunities of knowing their sentiments upon the subject; and one of those millowners, who had lately erected a large factory, informed him, that had he known, twelve months before, the intentions of the Government, not one stone of that building should have been laid. He would now allude to the aggregate quantities of silk entered for consumption in decennial periods, with a view to show that the increase of the quantity imported, without relation to its quality, was not the fair criterion of prosperity which the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) would have them believe. The right hon. Baronet's (Sir Robert Peel's) explanatory statement of quantities of silk entered for home consumption, from 1814 to 1834, showed—

In the ten years.	Raw.	Knubs, &c.	Thrown.	All sorts.
1814—1823	15,214,245	585,906	3,608,872	19,409,023
1824—1833	32,916,905	2,891,515	3,872,828	39,681,248
1834—1843	37,425,114	11,924,815	2,657,189	52,297,118

But of what quality was this increase constituted? Why, almost entirely of waste knubs and husks, as he (Mr. Newdegate) would show. The aggregate quantities entered for consumption for ten years, appeared by the table he held in his hand to be as follows:—

Total from 1834 to 1843	52,007,118
Knubs, &c., 1834 to 1843	11,924,815
Raw and Thrown	41,082,303
Total from 1824 to 1833	39,681,248
Knubs from 1824 to 1833	2,891,515
Raw and Thrown from 1834 to 1833 .	36,789,733
Raw and Thrown from 1834 to 1843 .	41,082,303
Raw and Thrown from 1824 to 1833 .	36,789,733
Increase of Raw and Thrown	4,292,570

By this statement it appeared that the great increase had been in the inferior article, waste knubs and husks, which only contained 25 per cent of real silk, but which, by peculiar industry, had been wrought up in the consumption. The proportion of knubs, &c., as compared with raw and thrown silk, was, in the ten years of the protecting period ending 1823, 1-40th of the whole quantity entered for home consumption; whilst in the latter period ending 1843, it had risen to 1-5th of the whole quantity entered for home consumption; and in that proportion had the value of our trade deteriorated since 1823. Those were the happy results of free trade; and he would ask whether, after this deterioration of their products, the ribbon weaver was in a fit condition to be exposed to further competition? It had been asked how was it that they then competed with the foreigner, whilst more highly taxed, and labouring under burdens their rivals had not to bear? His answer was simply the fact, that the English operative worked harder than the foreigner. They thus competed, whilst France set the fashions against them; and in proof of their exertions he adduced this fact, that at the present moment, when for once they had fashion on their side in the manufacture of the seven-inch ribbon, the Coventry men had outdone their foreign rivals, with all their advantages of home-grown silk and light taxation. Let him not, then, be taunted with the empty assertion, that the energies of the ribbon trade needed bracing to exertion by further exposure to the breeze of unequal competition. The right hon. Baronet who had last addressed the House (Sir G. Clerk) had dwelt upon the difficulty of collecting these duties. That might well be the case, for he had heard that some of the Custom-house officers were so ignorant that they were unable to ascertain the difference between plain silk and fancy silk. He had made an application to Government upon a former occasion, that they would appoint competent officers to examine these goods, but his application had not been attended to. The late disclosure respecting the extensive frauds in the Custom-house, however, clearly showed that if the Government had been anxious to collect the duties they might have accomplished it. If a direct taxation

(towards which he recognised a leaning on the part of the Government) were substituted for indirect, he did not think it would be much more easy of collection; at least, previous experience did not lead them to indulge in the hope that it would. He confessed he felt it a heavy tax upon his patience when he heard it asserted that the silk and ribbon weavers had not laboured to improve their products, when he knew of his own knowledge such was not the truth. In Coventry and its neighbourhood they had laboured to meet the spirit of competition that was abroad; and the manufacturers there had been eminently successful, as the evidence of the hon. Member for Leicester testified. He would not detain the House further than to implore the Government, as it was about to depress the agricultural interests, that it would not add to the difficulties of the labourers of his neighbourhood, by removing protection from the labour on which the subsistence of his family depended. The Government seemed actuated in this matter by a false feeling of consistency; and he thought that before sacrificing his constituents for such a reason, they might as well remember that it was not upon their consistency they could base any very strong claim to the confidence of the country.

MR. HAWES would not trouble the House with any lengthy observations; for though he attached much importance to the inconvenience which delay would undoubtedly be productive of to the various branches of commerce interested in the settlement, still he rejoiced at it, because it would tend to show that the principles held by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government (Sir R. Peel) were safe and valuable measures, and likely to promote the prosperity of the country at large. He confessed he had looked forward to the debate of that night with more than ordinary interest, because he fully expected that the challenge which the right hon. Baronet had offered would have been met on the silk question. The right hon. Baronet had challenged any hon. Member of the House to instance a single case in which either the consumer or the producer had been injured by the withdrawal of protection; and he (Mr. Hawes) therefore thought that, in the course of a debate which had already lasted three or four hours, some hon. Gentleman on the protection benches would have adduced evidence to show that either the consumer or the producer had been injured, and that the progress of trade had been retarded by the relaxation of prohibitory duties. But no hon. Member had accepted the challenge, and up to the present moment no facts had been adduced in support of the protective system, or tending to invalidate the assertion made by the right hon. Baronet. What, he would ask, were the tests of improving manufactures? Were they observable in the import of the raw material, or in the export of the manufactured article? If they were, all returns upon the subject showed that the imports of raw silk had greatly increased, and that the exports of the manufactured article had also increased. Did hon. Gentlemen remember the statements that had been made with respect to the probable amount of injury that would be inflicted upon the silk trade when Mr. Huskisson reduced his tariff? Upon that occasion it was said that everything would be in favour of the foreigner, and that the English manufacturer would have no chance in competing; for the moment that the relaxed duties came into operation the French would take possession of the market, and the English manufacturer would be ruined. But what had been the case? The imports had not decreased, neither had the exports decreased; but on the contrary, all the evidence that could be collected, and all the facts that could be brought to bear upon the subject, showed that trade had prospered more under a relaxation of duties, than ever it had done under the aystem of protection. The hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Brocklehurst) had alluded to the low rate of wages received by silk weavers in this country as compared with foreigners, and had accounted for it by the relaxation of duties that had already taken place. This was an important subject, and deserving of the fullest consideration. He was willing to admit the state of things that with regard to all traders which depended more or less on handloom weaving, a considerable reduction had taken place, but that distress was caused by competition between handloom weaver and handloom weaver. If the hon. Gentlemen who occupied the protection benches had read the Report of Mr. Muggeridge, the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the condition of the silk weavers, they would find that the evidence adduced went to show that the cause of distress was not foreign competition, but competition among themselves. They were struggling against one another. The Report of the same Commissioner set forth that the loss of time caused by

going to the masters for work, very much tended to reduce the wages of the operative, and that the defective state of their looms was another direct cause for their impoverishment. The factory system enabled millowners to improve their machinery, and thus successfully to compete with the foreigner; but the handloom weaver was not able thus to keep pace with the improvement of the age, and consequently suffered materially. Official returns showed that the declared value of British exports of manufactured silks had increased threefold since 1826, which was a strong argument for showing that the relaxation of duty had not injured the trade. The hon. Member for Macclesfield had quoted from Deacon Hume with respect to the state of trade up to the time the alteration in duty took place; but he had not continued the quotation to the next sentence, where a statement was made of the effect which followed in the three subsequent years. The hon. Gentleman had referred to the evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume, showing the amount of imports of raw and thrown silk in triennial periods from 1785 down to 1823; but the hon. Gentleman omitted the following sentence, in which Mr. Hume said—"I then take the three last years, 1829, 1830, and 1831, and find that in these years the raw silk was 3,075,000 lbs. against 1,900,000 lbs., and the thrown silk 374,000 lbs. against 355,000 lbs." He would venture to say that no trade had been so mischievously protected as the silk trade. With regard to the Spitalfields weavers, Mr. Deacon Hume said they were invaded by Manchester before they were invaded by Lyons. The Spitalfields weavers were ruined by the competition of Manchester and Macclesfield, when in point of fact they had a protected trade. The whole of Mr. Deacon Hume's evidence must be taken as adverse in the highest degree to the view of the hon. Member for Macclesfield. Mr. Deacon Hume was a public officer and a disinterested party; and therefore his authority was greater, and his opinion less prejudiced, than those of a silk manufacturer.

Mr. ADDERLEY said, that he did not think the principle on which hon. Members wished to uphold protection to agriculture, was at all applicable to the question before the House. He had received representations from his own county requesting him to support the Government measure of free trade. Amongst them was a letter from a manufacturer in Leek, who stated that he did not think those measures were calculated to do any injury to the manufacturers of the country; and that taking them altogether he thought they would prove highly beneficial. The writer also said, that it was supposed that Macclesfield was more likely to suffer than other towns, owing to the circumstances of its manufacturing so much fancy goods, for the manufacture of which France was so renowned; but having conversed with several of the manufacturers of Macclesfield on the subject, his correspondent stated, that without exception they all declared that they did not apprehend any ill result from the proposed measures of the Government. At the close of his communication, he recommended the adoption of steps for promoting schools of design; many manufacturers, he observed, being of opinion that if as much pains were taken in this country to develop native talent as in France, they would soon be able to compete with the French in works of design. He was in favour of protection to agriculture; but with such a letter as that before him, and with no counter representation from the manufacturing inest, he could not consent to vote for the Amendment.

Mr. ELLICE would not go minutely into the subject of this debate, which had been so well treated by those better versed in details. He had always stated his belief, even from the commencement of the discussions with regard to the silk manufacture, that it would be necessary to take the utmost care as to any measures that were applied to that trade. He never thought, however, that it would be possible to maintain the prohibition which many hon. Gentlemen thought to be indispensably necessary for the preservation of the trade to this country. In the original discussions he had always hinted it as his opinion that the silk manufacturers ought to look for relief rather from the peculiar burdens which affected them, and not their foreign competitors, than to the farther continuance of any great amount of protection. They had first the benefit of prohibition, and next of a large protecting duty, and they found neither one nor the other any security against the inroad of the smuggler. The time had arrived when the Government of the country proclaimed a great relaxation of the duties on provisions, and on other articles which particularly affect the producers in this as in all other industrial occupations. His constituents, though

they had some apprehension as to the result, were still of opinion that it was their duty, in conformity with the general wishes of the country, rather to concur in the measures for the relaxation of the restrictions on trade, than to persist in requiring a protection which it would be impossible to secure against the inroad of the smuggler. It was very true, notwithstanding the accounts which were given from several quarters, that the condition of the artisans in some branches of the silk manufacture was far from that which he should wish to see. He was also aware that amongst his constituents certain branches of the ribbon manufacture had given way before the superior art of the foreign manufacturer. In addition to that foreign competition, our manufacturers had to contend with a heavy export duty on the materials of finer descriptions of silk. All these considerations tended to make him less sanguine as to the immediate effects of the relaxation of duties on this peculiar branch of manufacture. But, on the other hand, his constituents felt they were about to receive a great measure of relief with respect to various articles; and he was happy to be able to assure the Government that they were perfectly willing to do the best they could to meet the new circumstances in which they were placed. They expressed their general satisfaction with the relaxation proposed, and more particularly for the removal of the duties on food; and in conformity with their wishes he should give his support to the measures of the Government.

LORD G. BENTINCK said: The right hon. Gentleman asked us, what our opinion is of the prosperity of any trade? I think we may say on this side of the House, that we think the best test of the prosperity of a trade is a general rise in wages; and we have it shown to demonstration, that in every branch of the silk trade the wages have been gradually reduced since the alteration of the law from protection to free trade. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester admitted at once that the number of Spitalfields weavers had been reduced from 14,000 to 9,000, through the effects of free trade. I think that fact affords pretty strong evidence of the injury inflicted on silk manufacturers by the operation of free-trade measures. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, in answering—which, in my opinion, he did not do in the slightest degree—the most able speech by which my hon. Friend the Member for Dorsetshire proposed the Amendment, jumbled up the whole of the trade from 1816 to 1845. He mixed up the trade during the ten years of protection with that which occurred during the twenty years of free trade; and then he said, "See how under free trade, during the last thirty years, the trade of the silk manufacturer has prospered. For fifty years before 1816, the silk trade had only doubled; while in the thirty years subsequent to that period the silk trade had trebled." Why, good God! the first fifty years were years of war; and is it fair to compare the state of a trade carried on during war, and which depends for its subsistence on the raw material imported from a country which, during a great portion of that period, was in the hands of Napoleon—in the hands of an enemy of this country—is it fair, I ask, to compare the state of a trade carried on under those circumstances with the state of that trade during a period of peace? Is it fair to compare the state of trade during a period of war, when we were paying 70,000,000*l.* of taxes, with the state of that trade during a period of peace, when we were only paying 50,000,000*l.*? Taking the nine last years of the thirty referred to, which nine years were years of protection, and, comparing them with the former years, it will be found that, in six of those years, the silk manufacture had prospered and progressed at the rate of ninety per cent, while under the twenty-one years of free trade that manufacture had only increased a hundred per cent. Can any man contend that a trade which, in twenty-one years, had only increased one hundred per cent, had prospered in an equal degree with a trade which increased at the rate of ninety per cent in six years? The hon. Gentleman the Member for Lambeth has appealed to the immense increase in the exportation of silk manufactures; but I cannot ascertain from the Paper lately laid on the Table of the House, where he finds that great increase in the exportation of silk manufactures. I will take two periods of five years each. I will compare the last five years with the five years preceding; and what do I find to be the result? I find that the average exportation of silk manufactures for the five years ending 1840 was 771,908*l.* in value; while in the last five years, during which the hon. Gentleman told you that the exportation of silk manufactures had so largely increased, the average amount of exportation was but 709,582*l.*, showing a decrease

of 62,326*l.* in the average value of silk exported from this country. Now, let us look how the matter stands as regards the importation of silk manufactures from the countries in Europe. And here I must take leave to say that, whilst Her Majesty's Government have given us the amount of the exportation to all the countries in the world, when they professed to give us the importation of silk manufactures, they excluded the importation from the East Indies. Notwithstanding that, however, on comparing the same periods of five years already mentioned, I find that the average weight of silk manufactures imported during the five years ending 1840, was 220,000 lbs., the value of which, estimating them at 3*l.* the pound weight—which I am sure is under the mark—would be 660,000*l.*; but during the last period of five years the value of the silk, estimating it at the same rate, was 715,586*l.*, showing an increase in the value of the silk imported of 55,586*l.*, which is exactly within 5,000*l.* a year of the decrease in the exportation of silk manufactures from this country. You perceive, then, that the increased importation of silk manufactures from abroad, and the decrease in the exportation of silk manufactures from this country, travel on *pari passu*, and afford pretty strong proof that the silk manufactures of this country are not in a condition, even with a protection of thirty per cent, to contend with the manufactures of France. Sir, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley) has expressed an opinion that it is no business of this House to interfere in matters where the parties immediately concerned do not ask for such interference. I thought the Constitution of this country required that we should consider what is best for the general good of the country; and that it was not for us to wait to be taught by the constituencies what is for the interest of the country. We have well considered this question. It is one which has been before the country, and before the Parliament, for twenty-five years, and we think ourselves as well qualified to judge of this matter as any manufacturers that may live at Leek or elsewhere. But if any hon. Gentleman thinks that the manufacturers of this country desire to see this measure carried, I can tell im a different story. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke knows the character of the three gentlemen who called on me yesterday morning. And what did they say? Why, that if they submitted at all, it was because they feared tyranny of this House. They thought the manufacturers entitled to greater protection; but they were afraid of the coalition of Gentlemen on this side of the House and Gentlemen opposite; and that if they asked all they wanted, and all they thought needful for them, they might loose even the small modicum of protection which Her Majesty's Ministers are willing to give them. What did these gentlemen tell me? Why, that since there was a free trade in silk, only two mills had been erected in Coventry—that Coventry stood still, while Saint Etienne, its rival town in France, flourished—that Saint Etienne flourished at the expense of Coventry. These gentlemen put into my hands a paper showing the different patterns of silk manufacture. The article at the head of these patterns, they informed me, is the least valuable, and that the only article which they are now able to manufacture in Coventry, and which they retain against the competition of foreigners—that article is plain silk ribbons—an article estimated at 39*s.* per lb. From the manufacture of satin ribbons, which the Government say are worth 53*s.* per lb., but which the manufacturer states to be worth 75*s.* per lb., Coventry has been entirely driven, even under a protection of 35 per cent. What chance, then, is there of retaining this manufacture there, with a protection of 15 per cent? The Government, I understand, have adopted as a criterion of the averages an article called Louisine, which is not worth 15*s.* a pound, and which the manufacturers tell me forms only a thirty-second part of goods of this description manufactured in Coventry. They also assured me that the advisers of Her Majesty's Ministers and of the Board of Trade were gentlemen whose interest it was to admit as much foreign goods as possible; that they were wholesale dealers (and I believe the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester is one), and proprietors of what are commonly known as "slaughter-houses." These men employ very few people. Two or three of these great houses reap enormous profits, and it is their interest to drive the English manufacturer out of the market, and to make their purchases in France, or anywhere that they may buy cheapest. Her Majesty's Ministers have listened to these men. Two or three of these large houses, called "slaughter-houses," employ about 150 persons, the greater part of whom, I understand, are employed in London during what is called "the season;" and at

the end of the season they were sent about their business. How can the number employed by those slaughter-houses be compared with those generally employed in the silk trade? From the Population Returns, I find that 58,200 persons are engaged in the silk trade, in addition to which there are several thousand ribbon makers, and about 30,000 others not particularly distinguished. Can you compare a trade that occupies at the outside not more than a thousand persons, with a trade which gives occupation and subsistence to very nearly 70,000 persons? There is another article, the last but not the least valuable in this list—I mean striped and figured gauze. The hon. Member for Leicester was obliged to admit that already the ribbon weavers of Coventry were driven from this trade. Figured gauze is worth 180*s.* a lb., but the silk of which it is made is not worth more at the outside than 28*s.* a lb. Then, all the difference between 28*s.* and 108*s.* is spent in labour, and is lost to the manufacturers of that locality. To drive the English artisan out of the market, the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government is going to reduce the duty now paid—namely, from 27*s.* 6*d.* to 14*s.* But if Coventry could not withstand the opposition of French gauze with a duty of 27*s.* 6*d.*, it was quite clear that it could not compete with it when that duty would be reduced to 14*s.* 6*d.* I shall now advert to the subject of wages, and on that point I did expect that the Member for Coventry would manifest a greater interest and certainly a larger share of sympathy. What did those gentlemen tell me, to whom I before referred on the subject of wages? They declared that the rate of wages was reduced 20 per cent since the year 1826. I speak on the authority of those three gentlemen whom I before mentioned, who assured me, and I rely on their word, for I believe them to be men of truth and veracity, they positively stated to me that since 1826, in Coventry, the wages of the ribbon weavers were reduced fully 20 per cent; and they were so low at present that it was scarcely possible to sink them lower; for, to enable the manufacturers to compete with opposition, they were obliged to drag those unfortunate ribbon weavers, who worked at their looms in the midst of their own families, to mills and to factories, so that their wages might be reduced to the lowest point. It was then perfectly clear that, unless the House were prepared to destroy every remnant of the trade of Coventry, it could not consent to the measure propounded by the Government. I shall next go to Macclesfield. The hon. Member who represents that town is a living witness of some of the consequences of free trade there. That hon. Member is a banker as well as a silk manufacturer; and he was a member of a deputation which waited on the late Mr. Huskisson in 1823 or 1824 to protest against a law which had for its object the removal of protection. He prophesied what too truly happened—for, instead of that hon. Member listening to all those dreams of prosperity which he was told would arise by the removal of those causes which bound the silk trade to the earth, and which prevented its soaring to a similar elevation with that of Coventry, he foresaw all the fatal consequences; so that while others drove forward in their fatal speculations, he held in his own hands a check which prevented an immediate and a destructive career. The hon. Member became a lender of money to many poor manufacturers, and to a very large amount; so that in many cases he had to become the unwilling possessor of mills; among others there was one mill which cost 14,000*l.*, and which became his for 1,700*l.* That was the way by which he was enabled to carry on his trade in Macclesfield. I ask, do you call that prosperity? Was that any strong proof of the success of the free-trade scheme? In the Amendment proposed to the House, the silk manufacturer and the ribbon weaver are not the only persons concerned: there are also included in that Amendment the milliner and the dressmaker; and they formed not an insignificant class of persons, for I can tell you that the dressmakers amount to no less than 106,000 persons; and are you going so to affect that protection on silk dresses which would reduce it from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* There are 106,000 dressmakers in England—there are 15,000 in London alone. Of the 106,000, more than one-third are engaged in Coventry. Am I to suppose you will leave all those individuals with their families to starve—am I to suppose you will leave them to take their chance for future subsistence—am I to suppose they will be left to drag out a miserable existence because they cannot approach this House, or loudly and intelligibly knock at its doors? Are the poor dressmakers to be left to pine in misery because they cannot vote for Members of Parliament—because they cannot employ the hon. Gentlemen for

Finsbury, or for London, or for Westminster, to plead their cause—because they cannot have the benefit of their able advocacy? But was that a reason why their interests should be forgotten, why their claims to public consideration should be overlooked? By no means; the milliners and the dressmakers are a useful and an industrious class of the community, and their interests would not be assailed, without at least the benefit of my humble advocacy. The present amount of protection on hats and bonnets was 25*s.*, and which it was proposed to reduce to 6*s.*; that was to nearly one-fourth. The present protection on caps is 15*s.*, which is to be reduced to 3*s.* 6*d.*, also nearly one-fourth; so that, under circumstances so distressing, the poor dressmakers will find their occupation all but gone. I brought before the House the other night what was the consequence of free trade in 1826; many of those milliners and dressmakers being thrown out of employment, had to seek an asylum in workhouses; numbers, from absolute want and from dire necessity, sacrificing their virtue, had to commence a life of prostitution; and you may depend upon it that the recurrence of similar evils will be the natural result of the measure now before the House if it pass into a law. Similar, I predict, will be the fate of many of the milliners and dressmakers of London. The want of employment will force them to seek a refuge in the workhouse, or probably drive them to the streets, to the increase of demoralization. Looking on these things as the natural consequence of the measure, I pray the House to pause before so large a number of our fellow creatures are cast abroad in penury and in wretchedness. All they ask for is the continuance of 30 per cent; and let them have it. I implore the House, on their behalf, to permit the continuance of a boon so trifling, but a boon which will keep them from ruin —which will save them from destruction. I implore you to exercise your sympathy for them, and not to allow that reduction in the duty which will so seriously affect their interests. I fear, however, from the coalition which has been formed with Her Majesty's Ministers, there is little hope of success; and yet I cannot but expect that those whose duty it is to look after the morals of the people, will save from degradation—will save from prostitution—will save from wretchedness, from poverty, and from impending ruin, the milliners and dressmakers of this country.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I hope that any parties who may have to exercise a judgment upon the principles of commercial policy which it may be advantageous to apply to the silk trade, will maturely consider the facts that are within their reach before they come to any conclusion upon the mere impulse of feeling; that they will take the opportunity of contrasting the state of things which has arisen, not under a system of free trade, as my noble Friend has assumed, but since the repeal of prohibition and the admission of foreign silks to a qualified competition with domestic produce—with the state of things which presented itself during that happy period when, so far as the law was concerned, you had absolute and unqualified protection. You have the opportunity of ascertaining what were the results of unqualified legal and nominal protection in that most favoured seat—I mean so far as law can favour it—of Spitalfields. You had there complete prohibition of foreign manufactures; you relied upon laws prohibiting the import of those manufactures. Not only were the duties high, but they were absolutely prohibitory. Your policy was prohibition. Well, what was the state of things there under prohibition? Do you wish to revert to it? Do you believe that it would be for the interest of the working classes, for the interest of morality—do you believe that it would protect the females to whom my noble Friend has in the last part of his speech referred, from the temptations and dangers of prostitution? In Spitalfields what was the state of commerce? Why, periodically and in rapid succession, there were presented examples of suffering and vice which I defy you to parallel by anything that has taken place since the removal of prohibition. I begin with the year 1806; in that year a letter was written by Mr. Hale, a gentleman well acquainted with the state of Spitalfields, addressed to Mr. Whitbread, calling on him to make an appeal to the Legislature against the state of things existing in that district. Six years afterwards, in 1812, such was the condition of that district, that it became necessary to appoint a local committee; and the report of that committee, made at a subsequent period, in referring to the attempts made to relieve the distress, states—

"When a depression in trade materially diminishes the demand for labour, multitudes are at once deprived of employment, and suffer all the miseries of want. The applications to the parishes for support soon become more than they can re-

lieve. A large proportion of those who are called on for the poor rates are themselves at these times in need of assistance, and under such circumstances to advance the assessment would increase the difficulty of collecting it, and often render the payment altogether impossible. Thus the utmost pittance that can be dealt out to the indigent is insufficient to support existence, and the distress becomes extreme."

This was the state of Spitalfields and its neighbourhood when the association was first instituted in 1812; committees were formed, and subscriptions raised; and there was a temporary mitigation of distress. From the exertions made at that time, the committee had the happiness to know that many were rescued from perishing; but in 1816 it became necessary to reappoint the committee. They then speak particularly of the weavers :—

"They are inoffensive," they say, "and quiet in their demeanour, industrious in prosperous times, and peaceable in adversity."

The operations of the committee were suspended as soon as the pressing necessity for them ceased; but they soon felt themselves "imperatively called upon to resume them by an extent and severity of distress that has not been equalled at any former period within our knowledge." They say, speaking of the weavers in 1816 :—

"Of this class nearly two-thirds are at this time unemployed, and without the means of support; as well as a multitude of porters, labourers, and mechanics in different trades. They cannot disperse themselves in the country, which is already overburdened with poor, and where, at former times of difficulty, temporary work might have been obtained; numbers of old hands are now dismissed. Even the resource of the army and navy no longer exists for the destitute; and many are refused admission at the workhouses, which are too crowded to receive them. In order the better to assist the most afflicting cases, as more than 100 members compose the committee, they have divided themselves into thirty-eight sub-committees, each of which undertakes the visiting of a district. During the last eleven weeks, they have paid more than 8,460 visits, and distributed 856*l.*, mostly in sums of from 1*s.* to 3*s.*, among 3,366 families, which contain about 14,400 individuals; and while engaged in this service, they have witnessed an extremity of suffering of which those who are not themselves accustomed to explore the abodes of poverty can form but an inadequate idea. They find numbers who had been accustomed to support their families respectably, reduced from long want of employment to sell or pawn their furniture, which had been purchased with the savings of former years, to obtain food. Their bedding, their clothes, and the very looms and tools on which they were accustomed to depend for subsistence, are, in many instances, gone; and little is left them but the bare walls of their rooms. Pauperism is spreading to an extent truly alarming. Many decent families have had all they were possessed of seized to pay arrears of rent; others are deeply in debt for the common necessaries of life; some have deserted their homes in despair, unable to endure the sight of their starving families; and many pine under lingering diseases, brought on from the want of food and clothing."

That report was made in 1816, and then such was the distress that 100 members formed themselves into sub-committees, in order that they might visit the various districts, and relieve the people at a time when the trade enjoyed all the advantages of protection. A meeting was convened in the city of London, and Sir Fowell Buxton (then Mr. Buxton) gave an account of the state of Spitalfields under this system. He said—

"We have all been educated in the belief that the necessity of going to the workhouse is the limit of human distress to the poor, yet such is the aggravated state of distress, that going to the workhouse is an object of absolute desire to the poor, and we are actually canvassed for our interest in their favour."

What were the assigned causes of that distress? Sir Fowell Buxton made an appeal to those who were then attending that meeting, and it shows how delusive was this protection. He said—

"One of the causes of the distress under which Spitalfields is labouring, is the importation of French goods, and the wearing of them by the ladies of this town. If you will accompany us through those scenes of destitution and distress, at least we shall gain this advantage, that we shall discourage the use of contraband goods which destroy the means of subsistence of the inhabitants of Spitalfields"—

A conclusive proof that though you professed to give them the advantages of absolute prohibition, yet your revenue laws were defeated in spite of prohibitory duties, and you did not succeed in giving them those advantages. Well, then, let me compare that account of 1816, under protection, with the Report which we have last received from the district superintended by Mr. Howell, that made in October, 1845. Mr. Howell says—

"Throughout the entire district a general scarcity of hands is noticed, and a consequent rise of wages. In the silk districts particularly, hands are very scarce, and I have been informed that instances are not wanting where children working half time have got as much wages, and in some cases it is said that they get more, than they did when they worked ten hours. I am told that a rise has also taken place in the wages of those who work ten and twelve hours respectively."

Well, I contrast that Report from that district with the Report I have read from the Committee of 1816. In the one case you had, not indeed prohibition, but heavy duties; in the other case, you professed to give complete prohibition. Sir, we ask what are the tests by which you deter-

mine a flourishing manufacture? We say the import of the raw material has increased. Oh, but (you say) in the returns of the raw material are included certain descriptions of waste silk, called knubs and husks. But if you wanted a conclusive proof of the beauty and nicety to which our machinery has attained, it would be derived from the introduction of that species of manufacture. The terms may be vulgar, and may not suit the lips of some hon. Gentlemen; but you have improved those knubs and husks; by your skill and talent you have converted them into a beautiful material, and you have thus greatly increased the quantity of the raw material consumed. But let us exclude the knubs and husks. My noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) says that the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Brocklehurst) went before the Committee of Mr. Huskisson in 1824, and advised Mr. Huskisson on no account to incur the danger he was about to incur; but that Mr. Huskisson most unwisely refused his advice. What was the result? And what reflection do facts and figures throw upon Mr. Huskisson, for not having listened to the advice then given him? When that advice was given him—and here I throw out the knubs and husks from the account altogether — when that advice was given, that is to say, in 1819 or 1820, the quantity of raw silk entered for home consumption was about 1,500,000 lbs. On an average of the ten years from 1814 to 1823—I am speaking now of raw silk alone, rejecting altogether the waste silk—the annual consumption, when that advice was given to Mr. Huskisson, was 1,521,000 lbs. Mr. Huskisson rejected the advice; he substituted comparatively moderate duties for absolute prohibition; and the average consumption of raw silk in the ten years from 1834 to 1843, had risen from 1,521,000 lbs. to 3,742,000 lbs., as it appears to me, justifying the wisdom of the decision to which Mr. Huskisson came; and so far as the consumption of the raw material can be a test of a flourishing manufacture, showing that Mr. Huskisson was right in substituting moderate duties for prohibition. But is the feeling of the trade a test of success? From the trade itself I have received no such representations as those which have been referred to by hon. Members this evening. Take Coventry. I venture to say that if Coventry had felt any real alarm at the lowering of the protection from 30 to 15 per cent, she has energy and intelligence enough to make her representations known; but Coventry argues as other places argue—she sees that we do not propose an abstract reduction of the duties on silk; she sees, coincident with that reduction, a total repeal of the duty on meat; she sees the admission of maize at a nominal duty; she sees also a great reduction in the duties on the chief articles of subsistence, and the ultimate repeal of all those duties. Coventry foresees the benefits of these changes, and she is perfectly content with the reduction of the duty on silk, looking at the whole of the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government. What is the case with respect to Leek? My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire went to Leek as a protectionist, expecting to be received with applause, and he was surprised to find them contented and satisfied with the proposals of the Government. Then, with respect to the letter from Macclesfield: why, the letter was accompanied by a memorial from the parties, who stated they were perfectly content to submit to a reduction of duties, and Macclesfield would be satisfied with a reduction of from 30 to 20 per cent. We propose a reduction of 15 per cent. There is, therefore, a difference only of 5 per cent between the representations of Macclesfield and the duty of the Government. From Spitalfields I cannot say that we have received many representations. I certainly received a deputation on the subject of silk; but when they looked at the other measures with which this reduction is accompanied, I do not think that there was any discontent expressed at the general measures of Her Majesty's Ministers. So far for the expressions of the trade; and I have a right to believe that the trade in general are satisfied with the whole measures which we propose. But my noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) has adopted another test. I say that we have a satisfactory result from the increased quantity of raw material entered for home consumption; but he will take only, as a test, the declared value of our exports during the period of the last five years. Now I say that this test is altogether fallacious. The late Mr. Alderman Waithman was always insisting that the country was ruined, because the declared value of our exports in cotton did not keep pace with the increase of our imports, and of our population; and he was always told that nothing could be more natural than that the de-

clared value of cotton exported should not increase, for with the diminished cost of production, and the increase of mechanical facilities, the articles would, year by year, be sold for a diminished sum, and thus, though there was a greatly increased quantity produced and exported, yet the declared value of the exports at the Customs, would not increase in the same degree, might not increase at all, or might actually diminish. So it is with respect to silk. The cost of production has been diminished—during the last five years greatly diminished; the improvements in machinery, and the greater skill of our workmen, have caused a diminished cost of production; during the last five years also the duty on the raw material has been diminished; it would be strange indeed, therefore, if the declared value of great quantities of exports had not also diminished. During the last five years, therefore, my noble Friend will find that though the declared value of our exports may have decreased, that circumstance affords no proof of the trade being injured. As we decreased the price of the raw material in cotton, so is it with silk; the declared value may be less, but there is no less quantity exported. Now, I can readily account for the increased quantity of the raw material consumed. There is a growing taste for silk manufactures: it is a taste which we cannot do better than encourage. Cotton and wool have been heretofore formidable rivals with silk; and cotton and woollen goods have entered into general competition with silk goods. But there is a growing desire in this country for silk; and will it not be for the public advantage, by the low price of the article, to enable the public to consume it more largely, and shall we not be thereby doing the greatest possible advantage to the trade? Then, however, my noble Friend will say, that there will be an increase in the quantity of foreign articles brought into this country; and I agree with him that if we give a taste for silk manufactures, there will naturally be an increase in the importation of the foreign article. But, supposing that during the five years preceding the last there has been great smuggling of the foreign article—supposing that at the end of those five years we are enabled to check the Custom-house frauds, and thus to impede the illicit introduction of the foreign article—then, I say, that the increased duty paid for silk articles will afford no proof that the foreign trade is gaining ground, and is driving out our own manufactures. That is what I apprehend to be the real case with respect to silk generally, far under the duty of 30 per cent, smuggling has been carried to a very great extent. Twenty-five years ago this very article attracted the attention of the House of Lords, and formed part of the inquiry before the Committee on foreign trade. That very tribunal to which my noble Friend referred, as being the body to do justice to those parties whose distresses he detailed—that very tribunal which he hoped would reject this measure, if it it should pass this House—that very House of Lords appointed a Committee to inquire into the foreign trade of this country, and silk was one of the articles on which they reported; and what was the conclusion to which the House of Lords came in the year 1821? It was this:—

> "That if a small duty only were levied on organzine silk, our manufactures would have nothing to dread from the competition of French silk, and that, even if the duty were reduced to 12 or 15 per cent, a considerable augmentation of exports might be reasonably expected."

So the House of Lords, the very House of Lords to which my noble Friend appeals—that very tribunal—after mature consideration of the subject, after examining witnesses interested in the importation of silk, and interested in domestic manufactures, now twenty-five years ago, came to the conclusion that if we did reduce the duty on raw materials, the public interests would require that the duty on silk manufactures should not exceed 12 or 15 per cent. We take the duty at the largest of these two sums; and after an interval of twenty-five years, having reduced the duty on organzine silk, and upon all the raw material, and having given every advantage for the introduction of the raw material as far as we can, propose, not the greatest reduction of the duty on the article for the benefit of the consumer; but after this lapse of a quarter of a century, we adopt not their lowest amount of 12 per cent, but the highest amount of 15 per cent; and when the House of Lords shall refer to their own Report of their own Committee, I shall be surprised indeed if they do reject the present measure of Her Majesty's Government. My noble Friend has also referred to, and has naturally excited the sympathies of the House by placing before us the helpless and oppressed condition of that most unprotected class, the milliners and dressmakers of this country; but I

think that if any class more than another have injuries inflicted upon them by the illicit introduction of goods which ought to pay the duty, it is the very class to which my noble Friend referred. I believe that contraband articles are largely introduced, and that there is a false reliance placed on protection. I believe that, at any time, upon payment of an insurance, silk goods and dresses to any amount and of the greatest cost, may be delivered in a contraband way for a sum not exceeding the duty which we propose. If this be so; if the taste for silk goods be on the increase; if we promote a still greater increased consumption by reducing the price of the article; if we enable the manufacturer to meet competition by compelling the sale in open day of the duty-paid article; if he be no longer subjected to the disadvantage of not knowing with whom and with what he has to compete; if we prevent the smugglers, who pay no duty, from meeting the honest trader, and inflicting great loss and injury from this competition in the disposal of his articles—the manufacturer of silk and the operative will have a better chance of employment, and of gaining that honest subsistence which they ought to gain from their continuous labours, than any advantage which they can derive from high nominal duties which we cannot enforce, for we cannot prevent the law being evaded. These are the considerations which have induced Her Majesty's Government to propose the measure now submitted to the House. We believe the interests of the revenue will be improved by a system of moderate duties; we believe that the interests of the manufacturers will be consulted by knowing the terms on which they have to deal; and we believe that the interests of those employed will be advanced, if it be possible to cut at this root of smuggling, and if we no longer profess to give a protection which is merely delusive, and which inflicts greater injury on the manufacturers and operatives than any which can be inflicted by fair and honest competition.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, I shall not detain the House two minutes at this late hour of the night, whilst I briefly reply to one or two observations made by the right hon. Gentleman, in the hope that we may by one more effort induce some hon. Members to enter on the same side with us, and thereby become the advocates for the working classes of this country. The right hon. Gentleman in his peroration has laid the greatest stress upon what the silk trade suffers by means of smuggling, and he has told us of the difficulty that the Government find in checking its increase, so long as the duty of 30 per cent is continued; and, therefore, Her Majesty's Ministers have resolved upon its reduction. It appears most extraordinary to me that there should be so great a difficulty in preventing smugglers committing this great injury upon the silk trade, when the return for the risk is so very trifling, compared with the incitements that are offered to them for a similar risk in other branches of trade. For instance, they have an inducement of 1,200 per cent for smuggling tobacco, and 250 per cent for tea; and in these articles there appears to be no difficulty in suppressing illegal importation—it is only in that of silk that the stress is laid as to the extraordinary power of smuggling. But with regard to the silk trade, I am at a loss to know how the right hon. Gentleman has obtained all his information, unless it has been through that celebrated individual who has lately paid a visit to the Vice-President of the Board of Trade; I mean, Sir, that fortunate trader, Mr. Candy, with whom Her Majesty's Attorney General has lately had an interview, and by an acquaintance with whom the Treasury benches appear to have profited not a little. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has referred to the state of the silk trade in 1812, and without telling us what it was that led to it, he turned round to us and said, "See what protection has done!" That is very well in its way; but I want to know, was there nothing in the situation of the country to account for all this, except the existence of protection? That was a period of the most disastrous war, when wheat was selling at 120*s.* a quarter. It was at a period almost as unfortunate for all kinds of trade, as that other period to which the right hon. Gentleman referred; I mean 1816, which has been referred to as the most unfortunate for the mercantile interests of this country. And these are the only reasons that have been brought forward against the irresistible arguments advanced by my noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck). Is the right hon. Baronet's case so bad that he can only protect himself by having recourse not merely to fallacies of political economy, but to historical fallacies, at once flagrant and contradictory of all experience? Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has also referred to the knubs and husks, which have occupied so much of our attention in the course of

this debate; and the right hon. Gentleman has said, what does it signify if it employs labour, and produces that for which there is a great demand, whether the article be of much or little value? I wish to observe—but in the first place I may say, that these knubs and husks are no more to be compared with silk than sheepskin is to be accounted as wool—but taking it for granted, as stated, that as large a quantity as 1,700,000 pounds of the article has been consumed in ten years, I should like to know what is the amount of the advantages which have resulted to the operative classes. To work up 2,000 lbs. a week of that animal refuse would employ seventy persons; and to work up 2,000 lbs. (the same quantity) of raw silk would employ 800 persons a week. The calculation upon these *data*—for the correctness of which I believe I may pledge myself—to work up in this country 1,700,000 lbs. of that animal refuse, would occupy for one year 1,200 persons; whilst to work up the same quantity of raw silk in one year would employ 13,600 persons. And now I leave the House to decide upon the comparative value of the two articles of the Tariff; and also which will produce the greatest amount of employment for the people. The right hon. Gentleman, to my great surprise, has attempted to account for the increase in our exports by alleging as a fact that it has proceeded from the duty having been reduced upon the raw material; whereas the real state of the case is this: the duty on the raw material of silk has been, since the great alteration, 1*d.* a lb., and the only change that has taken place since was the 5 per cent addition by the late Government. So it appears that instead of taking off the duty on the raw material, of late years we have actually increased it. I will not trespass one minute longer upon the House, but merely notice one other observation of the right hon. Gentleman. He has asked why the manufacturers have not petitioned? The right hon. Gentleman himself could have supplied the answer: they did not petition, for the same reason that the hon. Gentlemen opposite are at present quiescent about it—because they are satisfied to allow the Corn Law Repeal Bill to pass. But you may rely upon it that the manufacturers of England will soon show that there is a sympathy existing for the agricultural interests; and that this economical blunder will not be allowed to pass over, when the occasion has gone by during which it was necessary to suspend critical observations.

The House divided on the Question that all articles included under the head "Silk Manufactures" stand part of the Resolution:—Ayes 220; Noes 114: Majority 106.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hn. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Becket, W.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M. J.
Blewitt, R. J.
Botkin, W. H.
Botfield, B.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Busfeild, W.
Cardwell, E.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Childers, J. W.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, J.
Collins, W.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Curteis, H. B.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dashwood, G. H.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Dennistoun, J.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncannon, Visct.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, Adm.
Easthope, Sir J.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, Sir P.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, E.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, Sir D. L.
Ewart, W.
Feilden, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Fitzgerald, R, A.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Gladstone, Capt.
Glynne, Sir S. R.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. R.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcoat, J.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hn. Sir J.
Hogg, J. W.
Hollond, R,
Hope, G. W.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, P. N.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.
Hutt, W.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, J
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Kelly, Sir F.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Layard, Capt.
Legh, G. C.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
M'Carthy, A.
M'Geachy, F. A.
M'Neill, D.
McTaggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.

Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Meynell, Capt.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Morison, Gen.
Morrison, J.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Muntz, G. F.
Napier, Sir C.
Neville, R.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Ord, W.
Osborne, R.
Paget, Col.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Phillpotts, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Price, Sir R.
Protheroe, E.
Pulsford, R.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Russell, J. D. W.
Ryder, Hon. G. D.
Sandon, Visct.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Smith, B.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stewart, P. M.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, J.
Traill, G.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Vane, Lord H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Wall, C. B.
Walpole, S. H.
Warburton, H.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Young, J.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Acton, Col.
Alford, Visct.
Allix, J. P.
Astell, W.
Austen, Col.
Bagot, hon. W.
Baillie, W.
Balfour, J. M.
Baring, T.
Bateson, T.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, Major
Blackstone, W. S.
Borthwick, P.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Cayley, E. S.
Christopher, R. A.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Clayton, R. R.
Clifton, J. T.
Colvile, C. R.
Deedes, W.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Forman, T. S.
Fox, S. L.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gooch, E. S.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heathcote, G. J.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, R.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Hudson, G.
Hurst, R. H.
Hussey, T.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Leslie, C. P.
Lockhart, W.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Maunsell, T. P.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumptre, J. P.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, Sir H.
Spooner, R.
Spry, Sir S. T.
Taylor, E.
Taylor, J. A.
Thompson, Ald.
Tollemache, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Turnor, C.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Worcester, Marq. of
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.

Bankes, G.
Newdegate, C. N.

Further proceedings postponed.

House adjourned at half-past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 17, 1846.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Lord Campbell, from Wardens and Commonalty of the Mystery of Fishmongers of the City of London, against the Charitable Trusts Bill.—From Inhabitants of the Town and Parish of Dungannon, for Alteration of the Poor Law (Ireland).—From Monmouth, in favour of the Corn Laws.

THE OREGON NEGOTIATIONS.

The EARL of CLARENDON: In pursuance of the notice I gave yesterday, I now beg leave to move for the production of such correspondence between my noble Friend the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, respecting the Oregon territory question, as my noble Friend may not think it inconsistent with his duty to lay on the Table; and I think it will be quite unnecessary for me, in so doing, to assure your Lordships that it is the furthest possible from my intention to wish either to embarrass Her Majesty's Government, or to press for the premature disclosure of any information, or in any way to interfere with any negotiations which I trust may be still in progress. But, my Lords, when we consider the magnitude of the interests involved in the solution, whether by peace

or war, of the question now in dispute between this country and the United States —when we consider the deep anxiety with which intelligence from the other side of the Atlantic is looked for here, and the influence which it necessarily exercises upon commercial and financial affairs, I think it is important that we should not be altogether dependent upon American newspapers for such information as may have been produced to the Congress respecting the actual state of affairs in this transaction. For many weeks, and almost up to the present time, this question has been debated in Congress; while in Parliament, which has been now sitting for nearly two months, no allusion even has been made to it, except by my noble Friend the noble Marquess (Marquess of Lansdowne), and by my noble and learned Friend near me (Lord Brougham) on the first night of the Session; and also, I believe, on one single occasion in the House of Commons. My Lords, I think this silence has been well judged and becoming. I think that it has exhibited in both Houses of Parliament a prudent determination to leave the Government completely unfettered in its action, not to interfere in those negotiations, for which Parliament cannot be properly responsible, nor to aggravate angry feeling by unnecessary discussion. This course has been well understood and appreciated at home; but abroad it is liable to misconstruction, and it has been misconstrued. I think it is our duty to guard ourselves against the notion, that we are so determined upon peace, that we are indifferent to all preparations for war; and I think it best to guard ourselves against the suspicion, on the part of any other country, that we would submit to a peace purchased by concessions which are incompatible with national honour. But your Lordships will bear in mind, that although the language of the two Governments, as far as we are acquainted with it, has been inspired by pacific sentiments; and although the information which reaches us from America is of the same character, yet we cannot disguise from ourselves that the two countries appear to be gradually, but involuntarily, drifting towards war. I think, therefore, that the time is come when my noble Friend may, without indiscretion, be asked to lay upon your Lordships' Table such correspondence, or to furnish the House with such information, as it may not be for the public interest to withhold. My Lords, we have learned from the American newspapers that some time since the negotiations were suspended, and all proceedings put an end to. It is the furthest from my intention to impute any blame to our Representative at Washington; for I believe that British interests cannot be confided to a Minister more competent, enlightened, and conciliatory than Mr. Pakenham; and I will not doubt, therefore, although we are not acquainted with them, that the reasons which influenced him to decline forwarding to my noble Friend the proposal of the American Government, have been consistent with this character. But of this I am sure, that my noble Friend, in instructing Mr. Pakenham to renew those negotiations, faithfully represented the opinions and fulfilled the wishes of the people of this country. My noble Friend, in departing from the ordinary course of diplomacy, and desiring that the question of title as well as that of territorial division should be submitted to any Sovereign or Government, or any competent individuals of either country, pursued what was in my opinion a most judicious and well-considered course. For, my Lords, we have thereby given the best proof to the world that we have advanced no claim in the justice of which we do not ourselves confide; and we have given proof that however confident we ourselves may be of the validity of our own claims, yet so little desirous are we of obstinately adhering to them, that we are anxious that our whole case should be submitted to any impartial tribunal, and are ready to abide by its decision. I think this course places us in a proper condition; and I say it was a necessary one, because the people of this country will not consent to engage in war until they are satisfied that every step necessary to maintain peace has been exhausted. They will not themselves endure, nor will they inflict, on the United States the disastrous consequences of a contest so unnatural and unnecessary, until they are convinced that there exists on the part of the United States a determination to injure and insult us. Should that unhappily prove to be the case, national feeling would be aroused, and Her Majesty's Government, I am convinced, might securely reckon on the cordial, firm, and unflinching support of all classes in defence of our rights and vindication of our honour. But, my Lords, that there should be any such determination on the part of the United States appears to me little less than a moral impossibility; for I really believe that in the

annals of history there will not be found a record of any event equally wicked and disgraceful as that of two nations mutually dependent upon each other, bound together by the strictest ties of reciprocal feeling—owing to the determined refusal by one of any peaceful offer made by the other—going to war for the possession of an unoccupied territory, the whole fee-simple of which is well known to be of such insignificant value as not to compensate the losses and miseries that one single month of war must produce. It is true there does exist in the United States a party so reckless as to be ready to engage in war—true it is that by this party we have been rudely assailed—that our claims have been repudiated, and our whole policy misrepresented; but I must say I think that for this party great allowance must be made, and we must not be too prone to take offence at what may be attributed to the peculiar institutions of the United States—to the immediate influence of the popular will, and the electioneering habits of public men in America—motives of action with which we ourselves are always more or less familiar at home. But that this party should faithfully represent the opinions and wishes of the great and enlightened majority of the people of the United States, does, I must say, seem to me a moral impossibility. I cannot believe that in a country whose state of civilization is equal to our own—in a country where statesmen are to be found as sagacious and enlightened as any in the world—where wealth and knowledge are as widely diffused as in England—where they must assert the same power and confer the same advantages—and where, as among ourselves, morality and religion exercise the same degree of influence—in such a country, I cannot believe that such intentions can prevail, or that the people and Government of the United States would rush into a war without any just cause, and that, at the moment when America, of all countries in the world, will be the foremost and largest partaker in that enlightened system of commerce which we, for our own welfare, and without reference to other nations, were about to adopt—and the intelligence of which, I understand, has been read in America with all the satisfaction it was calculated to excite. I think on the present occasion it is quite unnecessary for me to do more than move for the production of such correspondence as can be produced consistently with regard to the public service; and also to inquire of my noble Friend what course the Government propose to adopt in the event of the Senate of the United States concurring in the Resolution to give the twelve months' notice, although I will venture to express a hope that such notice, so far from being received as a hostile declaration, may be viewed by us simply as a determination on the part of the American people, that the whole question shall be settled within a twelvemonth, but in a manner satisfactory to the honour and interest of both countries, and therefore calculated to render more enduring those friendly relations which have hitherto subsisted between them, and which in their mutual influence, I trust, will never be dissolved. The noble Earl concluded by moving—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that there be laid before this House a Copy of so much of the Correspondence between Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, respecting the Oregon Territory, as can be produced without Injury to Her Majesty's Service."

The EARL of ABERDEEN: In the present very delicate and critical state of this negotiation, it may perhaps appear to your Lordships that I should have acted with more prudence if I had declined to enter upon the topic; but however this may be, I was quite certain that in the case of my noble Friend, his sense of propriety, and his intimate knowledge of the great interests involved, would prevent him from adding anything to the difficulties with which this subject is already environed; and I will likewise say that his own private feelings would indispose him to make it the subject of any personal embarrassment. This expectation has been fully realized by the statement he has made. I think the desire expressed by my noble Friend is perfectly natural and perfectly reasonable. It is quite natural that when we receive from time to time from the United States information and documents of the highest interest and importance, affecting us in such a manner as this transaction must do—it is perfectly natural that your Lordships and the public should desire to receive from the Government of this country authentic information respecting these transactions, accompanied by such documents as it may be safe and proper to produce. I therefore declare that I know of no valid valid reason to object to the production of the Papers for which my noble Friend has asked, especially as the greater proportion of them must be already well known to your Lordships and the public.

But I must reserve to myself the discretion of, for the present, suppressing a large portion of that correspondence which has taken place between Her Majesty's Ministers and myself, the production of which just at the present present moment would, I think, be likely to lead to injurious consequences. I will say that I should not have been disposed voluntarily to have laid on the Table any such information as I am now called upon to produce. In the first place, it is quite unusual in the midst of negotiations of this magnitude, without any special object in view, to produce to Parliament an account of the particular position in which we find ourselves at this moment. It is true that the United States have acted differently, but their situation is quite different from ours. The Executive Government of the United States have to call upon the Legislature to take a direct course on this subject. The President proposed to the American Legislature a certain measure, to which he required their assent, and of course he was under the necessity of furnishing them with the materials on which to form their opinion in coming to a conclusion on the message so addressed; but this was not the case with us. Her Majesty's Government have no intention of calling on Parliament at this moment for any opinion, nor do I understand that it is the intention of my noble Friend, or any other Member of this House, at present to call on Parliament to pronounce its opinion upon what has happened in the course of this transaction. This, therefore, would have indisposed me voluntarily to have laid any information on the Table at the present moment; and another reason would also have made me unwilling to do so; for I must admit, that from the aspect of the negotiation, as represented in the Papers produced in the United States, and which I am in a condition to produce to your Lordships, an inference might fairly be drawn not favourable to the probable future result of that negotiation. From some of those Papers auguries unfavourable to the success of the negotiation might be drawn; and I should be indisposed, therefore, to submit to the House, at the stage of the negotiation at which we have now arrived, communications calculated to place it in such a light. I say, that such an opinion it would not be unnatural to form, but it is my decided conviction that it would be unwarranted and groundless. I cannot bring myself to believe—however the effect produced by the Papers to which I have referred may be as I have described—I cannot bring myself to believe that any reasonable doubt can remain of our being able to bring this matter to a satisfactory termination. I have no doubt of the sincere desire of both Governments to arrive at this result; and I hope that my noble Friend will not think me guilty of any uncourteous conduct if I decline to inform him of the steps which, in the present juncture of affairs, Her Majesty's Government may think proper to take. He may depend on it, that believing as I do that war is the greatest calamity that can befall a nation, and thinking also that it is generally the greatest crime a nation can commit, he may rely on it that every effort to avert this national calamity will be employed. It would be presumptuous in me to pretend any claim to your Lordship's confidence beyond that which I may fairly prefer as a Minister of the Crown; but if I might be allowed to express a hope, it would be that the conduct of this transaction shall be forbearing, conciliatory, moderate, and just, without producing any sacrifice, I confidently trust, of honour or real interest. My Lords, after all, it is certainly possible that our efforts may prove fruitless. In this case I can only say that it will be my endeavour not only to secure the confidence and support of every one of your Lordships, but to secure the approbation also of every state in Europe, and of the whole civilized world. My Lords, I think my noble Friend will perhaps not expect me to go farther into this subject at present; and I will only conclude the few words I have said, by repeating emphatically what Her Majesty has already been graciously pleased to say from the Throne, that no effort will be spared, consistently with national honour, to bring this question to an early and peaceful termination.

LORD BROUGHAM wished to take this opportunity of saying that he had received a letter from a worthy and most able Friend of his (Mr. Everett), late Minister for the United States, than whom there never was any person amongst all the Ministers of that country who more admirably discharged the duties of his high office. Mr. Everett was stated by him (Lord Brougham) at an earlier period of this Session to have purchased a globe marked with red ink, on which there was a line drawn favourable to the American pretensions, and adverse to ours. This

globe had been appealed to by a person in high office in America, as turning the balance in favour of their claim, and he thought it his duty, being in possession of the fact, to state publicly here that it was not wonderful the globe should be favourable to them, inasmuch as an alteration had been made in it after the order for its purchase had been given by the American Minister. In fact, this was done by the tradesman for the purpose of paying a compliment to the purchaser; and he ventured to say that his honourable and distinguished Friend Mr. Everett had no hand in, nor even been privy to, the artifice. Mr. Everett now said, in confirmation of his statement, that he had had no personal communication whatever with the globe-maker, but had given the order through another person. I can only add (pursued the noble and learned Lord) on the subject of the statements made by my noble Friends, that I join my hearty wishes with theirs, and express my confident hope that all those negotiations, thorny and troublesome as they now seem, will lead to a happy issue. And should, unhappily for us, unhappily for America, and unhappily for the whole human race, these so just expectations he frustrated, then all mankind will find that no blame can be imputed to, or, at all events, rest upon us; and, moreover, that if the calamity of war shall be precipitated on us, looked on though it be now by all the subjects of the Crown with the utmost possible aversion, it will, in such an event, be looked on by none with apprehension or alarm.

Lord ASHBURTON: Nobody is more willing than I am to admit that negotiations of the descriptions alluded to should be conducted with all possible prudence and caution; and that every precaution should be taken that the honour of the country shall in no respect be tarnished. I also perfectly concur in the opinion that the possibility of two countries in the state of civilization of America and this country, having the madness to become involved in war for a question worthless in itself, and for nothing but a mere question of honour, is an alternative which, whatever be the unfortunate expressions used by individuals, yet I, for one, relying on the sterling good sense which is the characteristic of these two countries above all others, cannot for a moment contemplate as likely to occur. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose that either country should enter on these negotiations with a view to gain any particular advantage, or on the supposition that either has undisputed rights; for it is impossible to deny that both States have pretensions to the territory in dispute, and that the only question is how the disputed claims can be settled in a manner which any reasonable man shall say is a reasonable settlement. I think Europe and the world have a right to expect from us and from them that such should be the principle on which our negotiations proceed; and I am sure that on our parts they cannot be in safer hands than in those of my noble Friend (Earl of Aberdeen). I hope I may add, from my own experience, and from my knowledge of the feelings of the people of that country, my confident belief that these negotiations will be brought at last to a safe and honourable conclusion.

The Address was then agreed to.

THE BELLEROPHON AND RODNEY.

The Earl of WILTON called the attention of the House to the extraordinary rapidity with which the above ships, from being totally unrigged, were lately fitted out for sea. In two days and a half they were fitted out, even to heavy ordnance and all sorts of provisions, for whatever service they might be required for. Nothing was more calculated to show the nations of Europe what our navy was capable of, in the event of our being forced to engage in the greatest of calamities, war.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH bore testimony to the truth of the description given of the energy and skill of the crews of those vessels.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE remarked, that it would be better to make such an experiment as that alluded to on a ship in commission, than on one which had immediately to be unrigged, after having been fitted out for sea in the manner described.

The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH: This experiment was merely resorted to for the purpose of seeing in how short a time advance ships could be fitted out for sea. The experiment, he need not say, was perfectly satisfactory, though it was unnecessary to put the ships alluded to in commission.

The Earl of WILTON had merely alluded to the experiment as a great feat on the part of the captains, officers, and crews of the ships which had been named.

Their Lordships then adjourned to Thursday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 17, 1846.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN. For Limerick City, James Kelly, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Mutiny; Marine Mutiny.

2° Coal Whippers (Port of London); Consolidated Fund (£8,000,000).

Reported. Out-Pensioners' Services (Chelsea and Greenwich).

3° and passed. Out-Pensioners' Payment (Greenwich and Chelsea).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Cobden, from Samuel Gordon, Esq., of Aungier Street, Dublin, and Inhabitants of the Parish of Grundisburgh and its Neighbourhood, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By several hon. Members, from various places, for Remission of Sentence upon William S. Ellis.—By Mr. Cobden, from Inhabitants of the Borough of Stockport, and by Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Coachmakers and other Trades of Croydon and its Vicinity, for Limiting the Hours of Labour of Children and Young Persons employed in Factories to Ten.—By Mr. Duncan, from Members of the Chamber of Commerce of Dundee, against the Factories Bill.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Inhabitants of Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the Tower Hamlets, for Remission of Sentence upon Frost, Williams, and Jones.—By Mr. Masterman, from Charles and John Chubb, Patent Lock and Iron Safe Manufacturers, of Saint Paul's Churchyard, for Protection of Manufacturers' Names and Marks from Fraud.—By Mr. Wyse, from Members of the Waterford Mechanics' Institute, and other Inhabitants of the City of Waterford, and its Vicinity, for Encouragement of Mechanics' Institutes (Ireland).—By Captain Jones, from Medical Officers of the County Infirmary, Workhouses, and Dispensaries, in the County of Londonderry, for Better Regulation of Medical Charities (Ireland).—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Householders of the Parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, for Expediting Metropolitan Improvements.—By several hon. Members, from various places, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Captain Pechell, from Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Farnham, for Inquiry respecting Farnham Parish.—By Mr. Lockhart, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow, for Alteration of the Prisons (Scotland) Act.—By Mr. Labouchere, from several Persons, for Consolidating Conservancy Acts.—By Lord Hotham, from Inhabitants of Great Driffield, for carrying the Small Debts Act into effect.—By Dr. Bowring, from a great number of places, for referring Foreign Disputes to Arbitration.

STATE OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. A. STAFFORD O'BRIEN, on reading the Order of the Day, wished to say a few words on the present state of Public Business. On the 27th January, the First Lord of the Treasury had announced certain changes, particularly affecting the agricultural interest. The right hon. Baronet had said, that he intended to accompany those changes with provisions which would not exactly give compensation, but which he firmly believed would advance the welfare of that body. It was now the 17th of March, and only one of the measures had been laid on the Table on Friday last, none of the rest had been seen. He did not mean to speak of it as a question of free trade or of protection, but simply as a matter of public business. The right hon. Baronet had stated among other things, that his opinion had undergone a change; he was understood at the time to refer to the doctrine of protection, not to the mode of conducting the business of the country. If such a course had been pursued by a Government strong in the confidence of its friends, and therefore firm in its tenure of office, there would still be reason to complain; but when the right hon. Baronet must be aware that the class most interested in the change was one which would no longer trust him, even from hour to hour, when he must know, too, that his tenure of office depended solely on the will and pleasure of the noble Lord the Member for London—the right hon. Baronet could not wonder that after the lapse of seven weeks those who were connected with the land should feel it their duty to come forward and inquire how much longer the suspense was to be continued. How long would it be before the right hon. Baronet introduced the Bills which he said were not to follow, but to accompany, his great commercial measure? What latitude did the right hon. Baronet give to the word "accompany?" Did he understand by it that an opinion might be pronounced upon the principle of one measure before the so-called accompanying measures were even laid upon t e Table? In reference to the Law of Settlement Bill, there had yet been no discussion upon it; and in reference to the Drainage Bill, the right hon. Baronet had talked of a period of three years in connexion with the details of it. Whether the sum specified by the right hon. Baronet was to have reference to that Bill, he could not pronounce, His complaint was, that he was utterly without the means of enabling him to judge. Did the right hon. Baronet know whether the agricultural interest was willing or unwilling to accept what he intended to offer? Did he know the average number of acres to be drained? Did he know the average expense of drainage per acre? Or did the right hon. Baronet mean, as he suspected, that it was all to be mere hap-hazard legislation? In the course of seven weeks something more ought to have been known respecting auditors and Poor Law Unions in Ireland. As a Member connected with Ireland, though not an Irish Member, he might add, that the matter did not stop there; the right hon. Baronet had said, that he meant to take the police force out of the hands of the magistracy and give it

to the Executive Government. This was to be a boon to the agricultural interest; and the proposal was, to deprive the magistracy of the share they now possess in the control of the police force. The right hon. Baronet had never given the magistrates of Ireland an opportunity to consider whether they would have the measure in reference to the police fund, or in reference to other plans of improvement. This great question of the centralization of the police was connected with the auditors and the Poor Law Unions. It was not his fault, nor that of his friends, that these accompanying measures were not brought forward. The right hon, Baronet had mentioned them all to the House as parts of his great scheme. The right hon. Baronet said, in terms, that they were only parts of one great scheme; and as one great scheme he had insisted upon its being discussed and adopted. This question was not to be treated as a matter of party, but as a matter of plain straightforward business; and the whole House had a right to claim that the various parts should be considered altogether. He was sorry not to see the right hon. Baronet in his place, and he would have postponed his remarks, if it had not now been twenty minutes to six, when he might reasonably have been expected to be present. But, whether he were in his place or not, Members opposite, as well as those on the Ministerial side of the House, had a right to complain that only one measure of the great scheme had been submitted to it. The right hon. Baronet could not wonder that while the landed interest was charged (not by him, for he was too adroit) with delaying the only Bill upon the Table, they should in return complain that he had committed a double error. He had endeavoured to expedite a measure by joining it with the crime of famine in Ireland. This was one error, and the other was the practical dissevering of the Bill before the House from those measures which were professed to be intended to alleviate and diminish the difficulties of the agriculturists. He (Mr. A. S. O'Brien) did not ask the right hon. Baronet to take another course on the strength of old party attachments; he did not ask it on the score of political friendships; they, alas! no longer existed; but he begged to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much longer the landed interest was to be kept in suspense? Whether any other measures, parts of the great scheme, were to be brought forward before Easter, so that the House might have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon them before it decided finally on the measure which would expose the land to foreign competition? Of course any Member of the Government would be able to answer him, and to give him clear, definite, and distinct information. If nobody chose to answer him, but left the matter unexplained, injury would not be done to the protectionist party, but to Ministers, in the opinion of all reasonable judges and men of sound understanding.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that he was sorry to have to apologize to the House for the absence of his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury. He could assure the House, and from the constancy of his right hon. Friend's attendance, they would readily credit the assurance, that nothing but the public business had prevented him being in his place at the usual hour. He certainly wished that the hon. Member had availed himself of some opportunity, during the seven weeks which he stated had elapsed since the measures of the Government were propounded to the House, to have asked this question as to the mode of transacting the public business, when the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government was present. In bringing forward the measures now before the House, his right hon. Friend had entered into considerable detail as to the various measures he intended to submit to Parliament during the present Session, in connection with those measures for the reduction of duties now under consideration. And in the discussion that then took place, the great anxiety expressed was to have a knowledge of the details of the Bill which related to settlements. That Bill had accordingly been presented to the House, and was now in the hands of every Member. The Bills relating to the highways and to drainage were at present in a considerably advanced state of preparation. The substance and object of those Bills had been distinctly stated; and it was impossible for any one who wished to form a judgment on the bearings and tendency of those measures not to be able to do so from the statements already made. With respect to the other grants that were proposed to be made in aid of the costs of prosecution, the maintenance of prisoners, and the payment of salaries connected with the Poor Law Unions, the hon. Gentleman was just as able now to form a calculation

of the amount of that expense, as he would be when the vote was propounded to the House in Committee of Supply; and until they would have a Committee of Supply, those votes would not be brought before the House. He was certainly not unacquainted with those votes, which would be laid upon the Table with the other estimates; but any Gentleman conversant with the details under those heads, would have no difficulty in forming an accurate calculation of the sum which would be required under the several heads that had been adverted to. He should certainly be most happy, if the mode in which public business was conducted, were such as to admit of a greater number of measures being simultaneously proceeded with; but he had had experience enough in Parliamentary life to know that the business of the House could only be transacted satisfactorily, by having their attention continuously directed to the particular objects that were from time to time submitted to the House, and finishing, or at least considerably advancing, the consideration of one, before they entered on that of another. From the Law of Settlement Bill which had been brought in, hon. Gentlemen would have the opportunity of judging of the bearing it ought to have upon the vote which they would give on other questions. The measures with respect to highways and drainage were in a state of preparation. Had he had notice of the question to be asked, he might have been able to state more exactly the period when they would be brought before the House; at present he could not do so; but it was not from any desire to withhold from the House any detail or information which was necessary to enable them to form an opinion on the other measures. He was extremely sorry the question had been put at this time, in the absence of those more particularly connected with the measures; he feared his answer might not have been quite satisfactory. All he could say was, that there was no indisposition on the part of the Government to make known to the House in the fullest detail all that was necessary for the guidance of their judgment; but in the conduct of business it was impossible to bring a variety of matters at the same time under their consideration.

PROTECTION OF LIFE (IRELAND).

MR. SHAW: As the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) had referred to the Bill for the Protection of Life in Ireland, he was anxious to hear from the right hon. Baronet, whether he had yet fixed a day for the first reading of that Bill? He must say, that if it was important that the Bill should pass at all, it was of all things important that it should pass without delay; and he could not help further observing, that the Government showed much less anxiety to afford protection to life and property in Ireland, than they did to remove protection from the native industry of all parts of the United Kingdom.

SIR J. GRAHAM said, that it was his intention to make the first reading of the Bill the first Order of the Day after the second reading of the Corn Bill.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

The further proceedings on the Report of these Resolutions was resumed.

On the Question relative to Silk Worm Gut,

MR. CAYLEY said, that he would move that those words be omitted for the purpose of addressing the House upon the present occasion. It had been stated, that the trade was generally in favour of a reduction of the duties on silk. Now he supposed that the trade consisted of the masters and of the workmen; and, from information he had received, he believed that neither the masters nor the workmen were in favour of the proposal of the Government. The working classes were certainly opposed to it. Public meetings in various parts of the country had been held, in which the working people had passed resolutions strongly conveying their disapproval of the Government scheme. An open public meeting had been held at Leek, in Staffordshire, in which such resolutions had been passed. A similar meeting had been held at Middleton, near Manchester; another at Manchester; and another at Ormskirk. At the latter place a free trader had occupied the chair of the meeting; and such had been the conviction produced by the speeches of those in favour of protection to the silk trade, that the chairman and his free-trade adherents had been converted, and had passed over to the side of protection. Several other meetings, at eight or nine different places, had been held, and at every one of them resolutions had been passed opposed to the measure of the Government. He was the Chairman of the Handloom Weavers' Committee, and he had since then enjoyed, as he considered fortunately, very frequent

opportunities of communication with them; and their opinion was, that the alterations which had taken place had been disastrous to their trade, and they were prepared to meet the present measure with every opposition—an opposition not, perhaps, much attended to; but still, as land and labour must go together, he hoped that if they could not alter the determination of Parliament, or prevent these Resolutions from passing, the Government would still be inclined to pay some attention to the prayers of these poor operatives, who surely ought to be allowed to understand something of their own interests. He earnestly entreated the Government to pause before they passed these Resolutions, which must produce the most disastrous effects. He would, if his strength permitted, notice some of the erroneous statements which were made on the subject of the recent discussions. The landlords of this country, however, who, say what you may, are not a mercenary body, have deeply at heart the condition of the working classes; and that feeling which they have for the labourers immediately around them, they would, willingly, cheerfully, cordially extend to every portion of the working community of the country. Let Parliament do what it would with the land, and with the landlords—it was not for them he was speaking, but for the working classes of the country, whose affections they must be desirous of acquiring, and on whose behalf he earnestly implored the House not to injure so grievously a body of men who had no dependencies except on their own labour.

Dr. BOWRING said, he had for years watched the progress of feeling amongst the working classes, and he could assure the hon. Member for Yorkshire that there was a very great improvement amongst them. The working classes of this country, as well as of foreign nations, were becoming aware of the degree of suffering which what was called protection inflicted upon them. Of this consciousness a remarkable instance was afforded by a memorial, addressed by the working classes of the city of Lyons to the Chamber of Deputies, in which they stated that they were poor, and were deemed ignorant; but that their poverty and ignorance did not prevent them from ascertaining that the labouring classes were deeply interested in the extension of their market. They were aware that protection, so far from being a benefit to them, was their bane. The English manufacturers desired it no longer, and the French repudiated it altogether. In consequence of the attention called to the superiority of French designs, owing to the greater encouragement given to that branch of art in France than in this country, and the immense disproportion of artists consequently employed—the numbers in France being as 100 to 1 in this country—the emulation of the English designer had been excited, and the result was that the disparity between French and English patterns was fast passing away. At this moment English silks were admitted into France at 12 per cent, while upon French silks imported into this country a duty of 30 per cent was charged, and, in consequence of the manner in which it was levied, the exaction amounted in fact to 60 and 70 per cent. He was sure the removal of restrictions upon the intercourse between the two countries could do nothing but good to both.

Mr. C. BULLER just asked to recall to the recollection of the House that the question of silk had passed, and that the article they were now upon was that of silk-worm gut, something used, he believed, in fishing.

Mr. BORTHWICK said, the hon. and learned Gentleman was exceedingly kind in his admonition, but it should have been directed to his own side of the House; for it was evident, from what had passed that night, that the Government and their supporters on the opposite side were determined to protract the discussion as long as possible. The hon. Member for Yorkshire had made a speech which had done equal credit to himself, to his class, to the House, and to the country. And then the Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) had followed with a speech to the effect that the working people, not of England, but of France, were in favour of the measure. Now it was most likely, as the people of France were our rivals in the silk among other manufactures, that their feelings on the subject would be quite at variance with those entertained by the people of this country. Let it be recollected that the people of France had not established the peace of the world at a cost of 600,000,000*l.*, as the people of England had done, and that our industry had now to bear the burden of that cost, involving, as it did, the greater part of the annual taxation of 54,000,000*l.* The greatness of France depended almost entirely on her domestic industry; whereas that of Eng-

land rested principally on the prosperity of her Colonies, within the range of which the productions of every climate and of every soil could be procured; so that her Legislature might, with perfect safety, extend the principle of protection over all her Colonies, embracing above 200,000,000 of inhabitants, and yet might obtain, within her own empire, the most ample supply of every commodity. The moderate protection contended for on behalf of native industry was not, therefore, in the case of England, at all inconsistent with perfect and unrestricted interchange of all the commodities that entered into the commerce or the consumption of a great nation. He deprecated the idea that the advocates of such protection, in opposing the present measure, were resisting free trade, properly so called, but the opposite of free trade. Free trade implied the unshackled exchange of the commodities of one country for those of all others on equal terms; but how could that be obtained in the absence of protective duties on behalf of the productions of a country the taxation of which was so disproportioned to any burdens which foreign nations had to bear? Let free trade be fairly and intelligibly advocated, or let there be moderate protection. But in a measure like the present there was a mixture of all things, and the assertion of nothing—there was "confusion worse confounded"—there was the absence of beginning, of middle, and of end—there was that which unsettled everything to settle nothing—that which inflicted all the evils of change on the nation, without any accompanying amelioration or advantage.

MR. MUNTZ adverted to the manufacture of zinc, which he said had been utterly extinguished by the free-trade measure, and nearly a million of capital had been thus displaced. It was utterly impossible that in the manufacture of this metal we could compete with the foreigner without protection. He said this disinterestedly, for he should, nevertheless, vote for the repeal of all protective duties, that all interests might at least be on the same footing.

The item was then allowed to pass.

Question agreed to.

On the Question that Spirits and Strong Waters, of all sorts, 15*s.* the gallon, stand part of the Resolution,

MR. ALDERMAN THOMPSON said, this head included the article of French brandy, &c., a most important item in respect to considerations of revenue; for the duty on foreign spirits, derived principally from Cognac brandy, amounted to nearly 1,200,000*l.* a year. The duty at present was 22*s.* 10*d.* a gallon. It was now proposed to reduce it to 15*s.*, by taking off 7*s.* 10*d.*, or nearly one third, which would reduce the revenue derived therefrom by at least 400,000*l.* Now he was not at all aware of the reason upon which it was proposed to abandon so large a portion of the revenue derived from this source. It could not surely be said that the object was to increase the consumption of spirits; for such an object would scarcely be avowed by any Government, and would not be reconcilable with any regard for the welfare of the people, either as respected their moral or physical condition. Moreover, if any such object were entertained, it could not be attained by any such means, because the price of the article must always confine the consumption to the middling classes. It might be said the object was to prevent smuggling, and a great deal had been said during these discussions upon that point. But how did the case stand as to brandies? Why, at the reduced rate of duty, the bonus it would afford to the smuggler would be 300 per cent; for a duty of 15*s.* per gallon was to be placed on an article, of which the prime cost was only 5*s.* per gallon. Further, the brandy trade was a complete monopoly. Cognac was the only description of brandy brought into home consumption to any great extent; and the import of that article was confined to some six or seven houses. Some brandy came from Bourdeaux and other places, but of very inferior quality; and all the best came from Cognac. Now, it was a striking fact, that in December last the price of this sort of Cognac was 85 francs per gallon, and it was now 120 francs. That was of the vintage of 1844; while the price of the vintage of 1845 (there being the two vintages now in the course of shipment) was in December last 95 francs, and now it was 130 francs per gallon. Little benefit, if any, then, it was obvious, could result to the consumer from the great loss of revenue now proposed upon this article. Nor was it possible to increase the supply of Cognac much beyond its present extent. It might be said, perhaps, that one object was to induce the French Government to show a more liberal spirit of commercial intercourse. His answer to that was, by inquiring what had resulted from the equa-

lisation of the duties on French wines and fruits? No benefit to the revenue—no benefit to the commerce of the country. On the contrary, in a short period after that, the French Government imposed heavy duties on our cotton twist, amounting almost to a prohibition, the only consequence of our measure in favour of French wines and fruits being, that we lost the trade with Portugal in a great degree; for the latter State, on finding French wines put on a level with Portuguese, raised the duties on our goods from 5 or 15 per cent to 15 or 30 per cent. He deeply regretted that on this occasion the Government had departed from the usual established custom; that the Budget should be produced before any great financial measures were agreed to. They were at present really discussing matters in the dark. No one knew the probable amount of the surplus of revenue (if any) over expenditure; and it was impossible that the House, until put in possession of the ordinary information on that subject, should be in a position duly to adjust the claims of different duties for remission or repeal. Much had been said recently as to the comforts and the welfare of the working classes; which he should conceive would be more promoted by a reduction of the duty on soap, than by the proposed reduction on brandies, &c. Under these circumstances, and in the absence of explanation or information, he should move the omission of these words from the Schedule.

Mr. EWART expressed himself in favour of any measure tending to extend the commerce of this country with France. He was in favour of a much greater reduction in the duty on wine than any that had as yet taken place; for, from the time of Mr. Pitt's first experiment, by which one half of the duty was struck off, to the present day, every year's experience tended to show how beneficial were the results which followed from the relaxation of the protective system. He was sure that the hon. Gentlemen who professed themselves to be friends of protection, were friends also of peace; and he considered that it was not the least important of the many blessings which he was sure would flow from the Ministerial project for the alteration of our commercial policy, that it was likely to have the effect of increasing the means of international commerce between this country and France and America, and of creating in these and all other countries with which we were connected, a feeling of attachment to peace, and an anxiety that all nations should be bound together in the bonds of friendship and concord.

The Marquess of GRANBY said, that there was nothing which gave so much encouragement to crime as drink. A work upon the subject, which he held in his hand, stated that in Scotland at least four-fifths of the crime committed in that country had originated in the effects of drink. He really thought the Government should not reduce still further the duties on foreign spirits. He felt at a loss to know upon what arguments this measure would be carried. He thought it was clear that if the duties were reduced from 22*s.* to 15*s.* there would be a considerable increase in the consumption of spirits in this country, and, therefore, they ought to be very careful how they reduced the duty upon foreign spirits. He should oppose the measure, because he thought it was a question of the great principle of protection to British industry, and it might be taken even in a higher and more exalted sense, for it not only affected protection to British industry, but also protection to the sobriety of the lower orders. He sincerely hoped that on this occasion humanity and reason would triumph over a most pernicious and most unnatural coalition.

Mr. CARDWELL said, that, looking at the question as one of revenue, experience had shown that they could not double the amount paid into the Exchequer by doubling the amount of duty. There were historical authorities to justify a conclusion as to the probable result of a diminution of the duty on spirits. Was the hon. Member for Westmoreland (Mr. Alderman Thompson) aware that, by a Return which was presented to Parliament in the last Session, and which had been circulated amongst the Members, it appeared that the ordinary consumption of French brandy in this country at the close of the last century was, notwithstanding the enormous increase of our population and the still greater increase of our wealth, actually more than the quantity which was now upon an average retained for the home consumption? The hon. Gentleman said that the proposed alteration of the duty would not prevent smuggling; but practical authorities had come to quite a different conclusion. The Commissioners who were formerly appointed to consider the state of the revenue with regard to the excise duty upon spirits in Ireland and Scotland, stated in their Report, that in 1811, when

the duty on spirits was 2*s.* 6*d.* a gallon, duty was paid in Ireland on 6,500,000 gallons; whereas, in 1822, when the duty was 5*s.* 6*d.*, less than 3,000,000 gallons were brought to charge; but the Commissioners estimated that at the latter period the annual consumption was not less than 10,000,000 gallons; and, as scarcely 3,000,000 paid duty, it followed that 7,000,000 were irregularly supplied. And the Commissioners predicted that, if the duty were reduced, there would be an increase in the quantity that was charged, and an increase in the revenue. Was this prediction verified? In 1822 the actual quantity brought to charge was 2,900,000 gallons, and the revenue amounted to 800,000*l.*; whilst in 1825, after the duty was again reduced, the quantity brought to charge was 9,262,000 gallons, and the revenue was 1,107,000*l.* The returns with respect to Scotland showed just the same results. Where they had subtracted from the duty they had increased the revenue; and he contended that, though this had been done, no harm had ensued to the morals of the population; for they had not thereby increased the quantity consumed, but had put down the greater evils connected with the system of illicit distillation. The quantity of spirits was not augmented, but the profits of those who lived by the evasion of the law were diminished, and the amount of revenue brought into the Exchequer was increased; therefore, neither upon the ground taken by the hon. Member for Westmoreland, that the revenue would be affected, nor that other ground taken by the noble Marquess—namely, that of the public morality, could the present exorbitant rate of duty be maintained. The hon. Member for Westmoreland also argued that we had gained nothing by any former remission or reduction of duties on French produce; but he asked if anything could be more satisfactory than the results shown by the Returns made with reference to the trade between this country and France? He certainly did not say that the trade was what it ought to be between two such great empires; but if the hon. Gentleman would look at the Returns, he would see that there had been an invariable increase year by year.

MR. KNIGHT said, that the maker of British brandy would be contented to go on, even with reduced profits, if so great a burden as the excise duties were not placed on him; but at the present time it could not be said that British brandy was an article gaining ground in England. The excise laws also prevented this trade from extending further than our own country. If English traders had the opportunity of exporting, they might then very possibly be in a condition to compete with foreigners; and there was no doubt they would certainly try to do so. He most sincerely wished that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had made an attack, with the same good will, upon the excise laws, which were most oppressive to the English manufacturer, as he had on the protective duties. He should certainly divide against the measure. The House divided:—Ayes 64; Noes 35: Majority 29.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Langston, J. H.
Aldam, W.	M'Geachy, F. A.
Baillie, H. J.	Mahon, Visct.
Baine, W.	Masterman, J.
Barclay, D.	Mitchell, T. A.
Barnard, E. G.	Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Blewitt, R. J.	Muntz, G. F.
Botfield, B.	Neville, R.
Bright, J.	O'Brien, J.
Browne, hon. W.	Osborne, R. B.
Butler, hon. Col.	Pechell, Capt.
Cardwell, E.	Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.	Peel, J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Plumbridge, Capt.
Cochrane, A.	Price, Sir R.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.	Somers, J. P.
Corry, rt. hon. H.	Tancred, H. W.
Dickinson, F. H.	Thesiger, Sir F.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Thornely, T.
Duke, Sir J.	Tollemache, hon. F. J.
Duncan, G.	Trelawny, J. S.
Escott, B.	Trench, Sir F. W.
Ewart, W.	Tufnell, H.
Fitzroy, hon. H.	Turner, E.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.	Villiers, hon. C.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.	Warburton, H.
Hanmer, Sir J.	Wawn, J. T.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.	White, S.
Hope, G. W.	Wortley, hon. J. S.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.	Yorke, H. R.
Howard, P. H.	
Humphery, Ald.	TELLERS.
Kelly, Sir F.	Young, J.
Kirk, P.	Cripps, T.

List of the NOES.

Allix, J. P.	Finch, G.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.	Floyer, J.
Astell, W.	Frewen, C. H.
Benett, J.	Fuller, A. E.
Bennet, P.	Goring, C.
Bentinck, Lord G.	Halford, Sir H.
Beresford, Major	Hinde, J. H.
Buck, L. W.	Knight, F. W.
Cayley, E. S.	Knightley, Sir C.
Colville, C. R.	Lawson, A.
Compton, H. C.	Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Disraeli, B.	Liddell, hon. H. T.

Mackenzie, T.	Sibthorp, Col.
March, Earl of	Trollope, Sir J.
Miles, W.	Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Newdegate, C. N.	Worcester, Marq. of
Palmer, G.	TELLERS.
Plumptre, J. P.	Granby, Marq. of
Sheppard, T.	Thompson, Ald.

Upon the article Clover,

Mr. ALLIX would request the indulgence of the House whilst he stated some reasons for requesting the Vice-President of the Board of Trade not to take off the duty of 10*s.* upon clover. He stood up in behalf of the poor labourers, who were greatly interested in the maintenance of the duty. During a great part of the year he attended a Poor Law meeting once a week, and there it was considered that the growth of clover, and the employment which it afforded, was most essential to the welfare of the labourers of the district; for in the winter months, when other kinds of employment were scarce, it afforded them occupation in preparing the clover for market. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department would take this into consideration, and allow the 10*s.* duty which they now possessed to remain. It should not be forgotten, that it was the 50*l.* tenantry that placed the Government where they were; although it would seem by the measures of Government that they wished to sweep them off the face of the earth. Did they really wish to ruin the gentry of England—to upset the aristocracy, and to shake the monarchy to its very foundation—and did the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who was bound by the act of the Government, wish for such a consummation. He felt strongly on this subject, and could not help expressing his opinion. He was aware the right hon. Baronet was omnipotent for good or for evil; he had a strong body of new supporters; he would not, therefore, divide the House. He only asked them to pause a little before they injured the poor helpless labourer, who was defenceless against their legislation. He did not often trouble the House: nothing but an imperative sense of duty actuated him when he did so. He had been speaking to some Scotch gentlemen on the subject, and they were as averse as he was to diminishing the means of employing the poor, and lessening the wages of their labour.

Sir R. PEEL: I assure my hon. Friend, and I have known him for a very long period, that I give him entire credit for sincerity of feeling: there is not a more independent, honourable man in the House—but at the same time, I must say, that I think my hon. Friend carries his attachment to the duty on clover exceedingly far, when he makes a duty of 10*s.* per cwt. on clover the foundation of maintaining the 50*l.* tenantry of England, when he rests upon it the maintenance of the privileges of the aristocracy, and makes even the dignity and existence of the monarchy depend upon this protective duty of 10*s.* per cwt. This is carrying the doctrine of protection further than I have yet heard it carried. But how does this duty of 10*s.* really help the agriculturists? It only applies to a very small district of England comparatively speaking, in which clover seed is ripened, and then to the producer only, whilst the consumers every where would be benefited by the remission of duty. I will venture to say, that even amongst the 50*l.* tenantry, about which my hon. Friend has spoken, that for the one that would be injured by the proposed change of duty, a hundred would be benefited. I believe there is no one class will be more benefited by the diminution of this duty, than those very 50*l.* tenantry. I have received urgent remonstrances from England and Scotland against the maintenance of the duty. Cloverseed is not grown where it is most needed, and where science is most applied and most essential to the promotion of agriculture.

Mr. ALLIX wished to explain. He had not said that the diminution of duty on clover would sweep away the 50*l.* tenantry, or shake the foundations of the monarchy. What he said was, that the measures of the Government would have that effect.

The article was agreed to.

On the fifth, relating to Oxen, Bulls, Asses, Swine, &c.,

Mr. W. MILES was very sorry the Government thought fit to reduce the duty on oxen, sheep, and other animals. He thought the duty had worked exceedingly well, and in the very few observations he would address to the House, he would bring forward first of all the supply which had come from foreign countries since the duty had been imposed, and since the prohibition ended, in order to show that the importation had increased since 1842, and that it now amounted to a large quantity. At the same time, he would show that the present duty had not in any way had the effect of preventing animals being brought

from abroad into our markets, so that they could not remove the duty on the plea that it was prohibitory, nor because it was unproductive to the revenue; for though such importation in the first year was but small, and though the revenue derived was consequently trifling, yet they must have observed that both were yearly increasing, and this year they were something considerable. It ought not to be forgotten, that when the Tariff of 1842 passed, foreign countries could not have been apprized of the intention of this Government to propose such a measure, and consequently had only a supply of cattle to meet the existing demand. Cattle could not, like corn or manufactures, be produced for the market in a single year; they were the growth of some years, and the foreigner had doubtless taken his measures to stock our markets. For his part, he saw no reason why the farmer's cattle should not be protected by a duty of 10 per cent, as well as the manufacturers. Those individuals who had been placed in power by the agricultural class seemed to overlook their interests, and to treat them less favourably than they did other classes of the community. The present duty was 1*l.* on oxen, 15*s.* on cows, 10*s.* on calves, 3*s.* on sheep, 2*s.* on lambs, 5*s.* on pigs, 2*s.* on sucking pigs. Now this was, if not a very considerable amount of duty, at least a very useful protection; but this they were about to abolish. He was not, and had not been, in favour of a prohibitory duty—he would not totally exclude foreign animals. He had brought forward a Resolution that the duty on foreign cattle should be computed by the cwt., and in doing so, had entered into the cost of feeding cattle on the Continent, as compared with that in England. He would not now go into details, but would simply call the attention of the House to Mr. Meek's evidence, which might be relied upon, as he had been appointed for the purpose of making Returns. He would quote from these documents the cost of animals coming from very different foreign parts, the freight, duty, and other charges. Six cwt. was the estimate of each fat ox imported. Now, taking an ox of six cwt. in this country, and computing it at 6*d.* per lb., the cost of the beast would be 16*l.* 16*s.* During former discussions, he ought to observe, that one country had been put out of sight altogether—he meant Spain; they thought nothing would come thence, the voyage was so distant; but as he then said, so it had turned out, that they had, and would have, a large supply from that country. It had been stated, that there was a falling-off generally in the supply of cattle from the foreign markets; but was it not plain that foreigners were only waiting for the removal of this duty of 1*l.*, so that their profits might be larger? Mr. Meek had mentioned seven ports, and in the following table stated the price at which the cattle brought from them could be sold here, including freight and other charges.

PORTS.	PRICE.			DUTY.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Kiel	11	9	6	1	0	0
Lubeck	15	2	6	1	0	0
Rostock	15	17	6	1	0	0
Dantzic	13	14	6	1	0	0
Elsinore	12	2	6	1	0	0
Ostend	15	5	0	1	0	0
Hamburgh	15	13	0	1	0	0

Taking the average of the price from these seven ports, they would find that, duty free, cattle of six cwt. could be sold in this country at 13*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* a head. He had already stated that the same animal was sold in the home market for 16*l.* 16*s.*, and therefore it would make a difference of 3*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* to the farmer. The amount of cattle imported from foreign countries for the year ending the 5th of January, 1844, was as follows:—

Oxen and bulls	1,114
Cows	368
Calves	39
Sheep	210
Lambs	7
Swine and hogs	361
	2,099

Then commenced the increase of importation, which, as in the case of Ireland, had been steady and continuous. In the year ending January 5, 1845, they would find the numbers imported to be as follows:—

Oxen and bulls	3,710
Cows	1,155
Calves	55
Sheep	2,801
Lambs	16
Swine and hogs	27
	7,764

And for the year ending January 5, 1846, the numbers were—

Oxen and bulls	9,782
Cows	6,502
Calves	586
Sheep	15,846
Lambs	112
Swine and hogs	1,591
	34,426

The increase of the year ending 5th of January 1846, as compared with that ending 5th of January 1844, would be found to be :—

On Oxen between	8 and 9	to 1
Cows between	17 and 18	—
Calves	15	—
Sheep	75	—
Lambs	16	—
Swine and hogs between	4 and 5	to 1

He held in his hand an extract from a letter from a mercantile firm in New York, the house of Messrs. Lawrie and Co., which he would read to the House. It was dated January 30, 1846, and ran thus :—

"Superior flour suitable for the English market 5½ dols. to 5 dols. 62½ per barrel. Freight to Liverpool 2*s*., to London 4*s*. Large quantities of the best beef are now being packed in this country in tierces, cut in the proper sized pieces for the English market. This export is greatly on the increase. The farmers are finding out the mode of making such cheese as suits the English market, and the shipments will be very large this year. Notwithstanding all the noise which they make at Washington respecting Oregon, they have not the slightest intention of going to war about it."

It was evident that an increase in cattle might be expected from America—they were fast adapting themselves to supply the wants of the European markets. [Mr. Escott : Hear.] The hon. Member might cheer, and he would say there might be some reason for the cheer, if Ireland and Scotland were unable with the English farmer to supply their markets; but surely, if they would not consider the case of the English agriculturists, they ought to take into account the people of Scotland and of Ireland, in which agriculture was the only thing that flourished, and upon which the great bulk of the publication depended for support. The number of animals imported from Ireland, in the quarter ending January 5, 1846, was as follows :—

Oxen, bulls, and cows	32,883
Calves	583
Sheep and lambs	32,576
Swine	104,141
	170,183

He had no doubt but some Gentlemen from Scotland would address the House on this matter, and he (Mr. Miles) would not anticipate their remarks. The Scotch cattle, it should be observed, from the length of the journey, were much depreciated in value when they reached the English market. On the whole, he could see no reason why the duty should not remain upon cattle, at least as long as it would remain upon corn ; nor could he perceive why they wished to remove the protective duty from raw home produce, and expose it to the competition of the world, whilst they allowed a protective duty to remain upon manufactures in which it was admitted we excelled. He did not intend to take more than one division on this matter, and would therefore move, that oxen, cows, calves, sheep, lambs, swine and hogs, bacon, beef, fresh or slightly salted, beef salted not being corned beef, meat salted or fresh and otherwise described, pork fresh and pork salted (not hams), be omitted from the Resolution.

Colonel SIBTHORP seconded the Amendment. The right hon. Baronet seemed determined to pursue the same headlong course, reckless of consequences, and to disregard entirely the interests of those who placed him on the bench where he then sat. The farmers were, after all, not so much disappointed as disgusted at the conduct of the right hon. Baronet, for they did not expect consistency from him. The farmers, in common with most people, wished that the reign of the right hon. Baronet might be very short, and felt some consolation that it must, at all events, be terminated at the next general election. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) asked him to accept the Chiltern Hundreds; but he disdained being the nominee of Government, and told him so. Since then now he had the happiness to inform the right hon. Baronet he had received a letter from his constituents, in which they expressed regret that he had not accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. [*Laughter.*] Let not hon. Gentleman laugh till they had heard the whole of the sentence—"so that they might have an opportunity of electing him free of expense." He should, he knew, get a reception very different from that which the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Escott) might expect, because he had not ratted to the Treasury benches : they might as well attempt to take blood out of a milestone as to obtain concessions from the right hon. Baronet. He hoped that the period was not far distant when Englishmen would have an opportunity of showing what they thought of the conduct of Government in this matter. There seemed to be some probability of war, and if so, he should like to know how their navy was to be victualled. Though they might be vanquished in point of numerical strength, he thought they had the best of the argument. At all events he had felt it his duty to come down every night, and,

if necessary, to record his vote against the destructive measures of the Government. The right hon. Baronet would eventually find, as he had already told him, that he was sitting between two stools, between which himself and his Administration must soon fall to the ground.

MR. PHILIP HOWARD wished to suggest to his right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, whether it would not be advisable to impose a small registration duty on the importation of foreign cattle; not for any purpose of revenue, farther than paying the amount of the Custom-house charges, but as a means of having a correct account of the number imported. He was himself favourable to the free importation of cattle from abroad; because, as they were generally brought over in a lean condition, the English farmer would have a part of the profits arising from fattening them fit for the London market.

SIR ROBERT PEEL said, after listening to the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire with all the attention which was due to the station filled by the hon. Gentleman, and to the great attention which he had paid to this subject, he must confess he felt surprised that the hon. Gentleman had not admitted that some of the statements which he had made were calculated to diminish the alarm which he alleged existed as the consequence of the withdrawal of the import duty, not only on foreign cattle, but also on other articles of agricultural produce. The hon. Member had stated this remarkable fact in the course of his speech, that in a single quarter of a year there had been no less than 171,000 animals, including oxen, bulls, cows, and sheep, imported from Ireland into this country. In that short period there had been no less than 171,000 animals entering into competition with the graziers of this country from Ireland; while within the last three years there had not been brought in, under the reduced duty, from foreign countries, more than 140,000 oxen. But surely, if the great importation on one side, as stated by the hon. Gentleman, did not affect the price of meat in the English market, the comparatively trifling importation from foreign countries could not have that effect. He held in his hand a comparison of the Government contracts for fresh and salt meat in the home market from the year 1836 to 1845, and notwithstanding this enormous importation from Ireland, and the importation from foreign countries during the last three years, what were the results which it showed? Why, that in 1843 the price of fresh beef per cwt. was 1*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*, while in 1845 the price was 2*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* In salt beef the contract price per tierce of 304lbs. was 3*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* in 1843; and he was very sorry to say, no less than 6*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.* in 1845. Again, in the article of salt pork, in the face of the Irish import, and of all the importation which three years ago was threatened to come from the provinces of the Mississippi, when a calculation was entered into to show that 100 sows would produce, in the course of a number of years, no less than 232,000,000 of pigs; which was one of the demonstrations of the hon. Gentleman on that occasion: in opposing the change in the Tariff in 1842, it was proved, greatly to the alarm of every holder of a pig in this country, that in the course of five or ten years 100 sows would produce the enormous number of 232,000,000 of pigs; which were—to use the phrase of the hon. Gentleman—to inundate the markets of this country. Now, in place of the Irish import, and the American import of pork, reducing the price in the English market, the fact was, that the contract price of salt pork per tierce of 320 lbs., which in 1843 was 3*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.*, had advanced in the present year to 6*l.* 12*s.* 11*d.* Now, when the hon. Gentleman was stating that fact of the vast importation of Irish cattle in a quarter of a year, did he not, he would ask him, question thus: if in Ireland, where the soil was much more easily cultivated; where wages were much lower than in this country—for in Ireland he believed the wages of the agricultural labourer were certainly not more than 8*d.* a day in the best part of the year; in addition to which they should also bear in mind that there was no property tax in Ireland, that there was no land tax in Ireland—that if with all these advantages in Ireland the English grazier was notwithstanding able to compete with Irish cattle, had he any real danger to dread from a similar free importation from foreign countries? If the agricultural interests were able to compete—successfully to compete—with the imports from Ireland, a country having a soil more fertile and more easily cultivated, and where wages were lower and where taxes were less than in this country, and where these imports were so great as to amount to 171,000 animals in a single quarter of a year; if, under these circumstances, they were able not only to compete successfully with Ireland,

but to obtain the enormous increase of price which he had mentioned; then how, he would ask the hon. Gentleman, did he draw the conclusion that a free importation of cattle from Holland was to prove so dangerous? It was quite beside the question to assert that the encouragement of agriculture in Ireland ought not to be lost sight of. Though it might be an important matter to encourage the agriculture of that country, that could have no more to do with the argument of the hon. Gentleman, that the importation of foreign cattle would prove ruinous to the English farmers, than had the question of the importation of Dutch cattle. It was no encouragement or consolation to the farmers of the country to say, "You are ruined; but then the ruin has been effected not by a foreigner, but by a fellow subject—by the Irish farmer." But the fact is, you are not ruined by him. Notwithstanding his better soil and his cheaper labour, and his diminished taxation, you are still enabled to compete successfully with him; and why should you not also be able to compete with the Belgian farmer? It had been calculated that there were 1,600,000 oxen required for the consumption of this country. No less than 200,000 were necessary for the consumption of London alone; and how small a proportion of this number was imported from foreign countries? But what was the fact with regard to the effect of this importation on the price of meat? After reducing the duty on foreign cattle to what was thought before to be so low an amount, was not the price of beef still enormously high in this market, and had not every butcher been obliged latterly even to raise his prices still higher? When the hon. Gentleman, therefore, said that Her Majesty's Government were sacrificing the agricultural interests—that they were acting treacherously towards those who had sent them there—did he produce any proof that such was the fact? On the contrary, had not he shown that the price of cattle, under the last alteration in the Tariff, had increased, and was still increasing; and did it never occur to them, that with improved comforts, with higher wages, or at least with wages which would give an increased command over the necessaries of life, there would be a still greater consumption of meat among the population of this country, and that an increased price would arise from an increased demand? Was it not possible that when such was the result during the last three years—there having been a continuance of manufacturing prosperity, and a small quantity of meat having, for the first time during some years, entered into the consumption of a portion of the labouring population of this country—that a continuance and an increase of that prosperity would increase the demand; and, as a necessary consequence, increase the price for meat, when it would be no longer necessary that the working classes should have their food limited to potatoes or bread? The effect of the change in the Tariff, in his opinion, was, that while they increased the comforts of the manufacturer and the labourer, they had not diminished prices for agricultural produce. But it was said, what good had they done by diminishing these import duties? One good effect was, that they had at least put a check on extravagant prices. The hon. Gentleman had stated that the supply of sheep in Smithfield market had fallen off 16,000, and that but for the importation of foreign cattle, the prices now would be much higher than they actually were; but, in his opinion, if the price of meat were now 10*d.* per lb., instead of 7*d.* or 8*d.*, the change would not be for the benefit of the agricultural classes. An important consideration, not alluded to by the hon. Gentleman, was, that the free admission of foreign barley would enable the English farmer to compete on still more favourable terms than heretofore with the foreign feeder. The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. P. Howard) had suggested that a small duty should be imposed on foreign cattle imported, in order that the actual number brought into this country might be known; but he could tell the hon. Member that, as no smuggling would exist, the precise number imported would be known. He could give the hon. Gentleman and the House every possible assurance that the fullest and most satisfactory information would be secured; and that the precise number of oxen, of sheep, and other animals, would be ascertained by the arrangements contemplated by Her Majesty's Government with perfect regularity and certainty, and without the imposition of any duty. Under all the circumstances, considering the tendency which he thought—if they looked to the state of the market for several years past—they would find to a gradual increase in the price of meat, and considering the advantages which the agriculturists would have in the increased facilities for fattening cattle, he felt bound to adhere to the proposition originally laid down by Her Majesty's Go-

vernment, of admitting foreign cattle duty free.

MR. FINCH was sure that the right hon. Gentleman would take the line he had taken, and produce the high price of meat as a proof that the English agriculturist had nothing to fear. But the existence of high prices was the worst reason for taking off the duties that it was possible to imagine; because, when the prices were high the duties would go into the pocket of the foreign importer. With respect to the general question, when the right hon. Baronet introduced his measure in 1842, he stated as one reason for allaying the fears of the English agriculturists, that their breed of cattle was so superior that they had nothing to apprehend. But that reason was subsiding every year. Two years ago the Dutch and Belgians had purchased some of the finest animals in the English market; their breeds were improving every year, and in a year or two they would be able to compete with the finest of our breeds. With respect to the increase of prices, this was a mere temporary evil. The British farmer had suffered enormously from the murrain in his cattle, and if ever there was a time when he required high prices to remunerate him for his loss, it was the present. He knew one farmer, a neighbour of his, who had lost 300*l.* in the course of three months by the murrain in his cattle, and others had lost in proportion. Then they were told that the increase in the price of meat was a reason for the importation of foreign meat. Now, he believed the farmer would have no objection to the operation of the sliding-scale, in the case of meat; but when the right hon. Baronet gave as a reason for taking off the duty that the prices were high, he wished to ask whether, when the prices were low, he would put the duty on again. Then the right hon. Baronet said, we could compete with the Irish beasts—why not with the foreigner? Now, he would tell the right hon. Baronet that the introduction of Irish cattle was of the most essential service to the English graziers, for they were introduced into the midland counties to be fattened, and then sent to the London market. But the Dutch or the Belgian cattle would be sent over fattened ready for the market. He despaired, however, of making any impression on the right hon. Baronet; but he would address himself to the free traders opposite. He knew they were anxious to abolish the Excise, and he trusted they had no wish unnecessarily to injure the English farmer. Now, he had lately had a conversation with an intelligent farmer, who told him—and he had made the same statement before a Committee of the other House—that, at the present moment, the excise duty imposed a tax of 3*l.* 10*s.* a head upon their cattle. This was caused by the operation of the malt tax. The right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer laughed at this statement, which only showed how little he knew of practical agriculture. He should be sorry to make any statement in that House which he was not able to prove in detail, and therefore he would state that there was an inferior sort of barley which could be sold for 24*s.* per quarter. When that barley was malted and paid the duty, it cost 12*l.*; without the duty it would be 6*l.* 10*s.* The same quantity of oil-cake would cost 10*l.*, and the difference between these two prices was 3*l.* 10*s.*, which constituted a tax upon the English feeder to that extent. At the present time, indeed, he might reckon the tax at the whole extent of the price of the oil-cake, or 10*l.*; for, in consequence of last year's barley crop being a good one, the inferior barley was altogether unsaleable; but at all times the tax would amount to 3*l.* 10*s.* If Her Majesty's Ministers would remit the malt tax, or make such arrangements as would enable the British farmer to feed his cattle with malt free of duty, he should not oppose the present proposition in the Tariff; and he addressed himself on this subject to hon. Gentleman opposite, because he knew that they were in favour of fair play, and because they knew that in order to carry out free-trade principles they must abolish the Excise.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, his hon. Friend had charged him with showing his ignorance of practical agriculture. Now, he must say, that he did not profess to have much practical knowledge of that art; but it would be in the recollection of the House, that last Session the hon. Member for Northamptonshire had brought in a Bill to allow farmers to use malt for fattening their cattle; and at that time it was stated that great doubts were entertained whether malt was better for cattle than raw barley; and great authorities were produced to show that raw barley would fatten cattle sooner, and cause them to yield more milk than feeding them on malt would do. At that time he entered into an engagement

with his hon. Friend that the experiment should be fairly tried; and, accordingly, since that time some cattle and cows had been shut up and fed—the one set exclusively on malt, the other on raw barley; and the result had proved that those animals which were fed on raw barley yielded more milk and arrived at maturity in a shorter time than those animals which were fed on malt. He had the proceeds of the experiment here in his hand; they had been moved for by the other House of Parliament, they had been printed, and they would, in a short time, be open to the inspection of Members, who would thus see that instead of the agriculturists being injured to the extent of 3*l.* 10*s.* a head by the operation of the malt tax, it now turned out that if they had been compelled to feed cattle on malt, even without the duty, it would have been doing an injury to the agriculturists. These Papers would, as he had said, be in the hands of Members in a short time; and though he was ignorant of agriculture, and the hon. Member was very profoundly versed in agriculture, yet these experiments would be laid before the House, and the House would see the results, with all the details of what was eaten by the brown cow and what by the white cow. The experiments were conducted in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, under the superintendence of a gentleman equally eminent in agriculture and in chemistry, and he had no doubt they would prove satisfactory to the House. His hon. Friend had also complained of the influx of cattle from Holland. Now, of all the countries in the world, he should say, if taxation was to be taken as one of the elements of competition, Holland was the least able to compete with our farmers; for, if there was one country in the world taxed more than another, Holland was that country. He apprehended his hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire was aware of this; for, though he stated that cattle would be brought from Holland, yet he omitted telling the House what was the price of those cattle brought from any part in Holland. So far from sharing in the fears of the hon. Member, that when prices were low there would be an influx of cattle into this country, he believed that when prices were low the importation of cattle would cease to be profitable, and the English agriculturist would retain all the advantages of the home market without having the odium of a monopoly.

Sir J. TYRRELL said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down would wish to be believed that he was a practical farmer—[The Chancellor of the Exchequer: No!]—or, at any rate, he would wish them to be of the opinion that he had given the House a practical statement, as to what was not good for the fattening of cattle. His hon. Friends had not at their command so many learned professors as the right hon. Baronet had; but if the opinions of those learned professors on the subject of fattening cattle with malt, had no greater weight with the country than the report of another learned Commission, on the potato disease in Ireland, then the statement of the right hon. Gentleman would require greater confirmation than he had yet offered to the House. He believed the real facts of the case were, that when malt was mixed with other grain, it made the cattle thirsty, and thus made them what was called "do better," or fatten better, than when fed on raw barley. But he chiefly rose to answer an observation of the right hon. Baronet, who had been pleased to triumph over the hon. Member for Somerset, because his predictions as to the mass of pork which would be brought from America had not been fulfilled. Now he wished to ask the right hon. Baronet if he was not answerable for the falling-off in the supply of British cattle, by the introduction, by means of his Tariff, of diseased foreign cattle? He knew he might not have any great character for agricultural knowledge in this House; but he would confidently repeat his statement, that the introduction of foreign cattle which had previously been prohibited, did bring disease into this country, particularly that which was known by the name of the lungs disease, and which had been most fatal in its ravages on cattle. He must, therefore, state to the right hon. Baronet, that the panic caused by his Tariff prevented growers from breeding cattle; that the introduction of disease had cut off many of those which were bred; and that these causes had combined to bring about the increased price of food. There was another cause which the right hon. Baronet would admit had caused an increase in the consumption of meat in this country—he meant the making of railways. Now, he did not believe that the right hon. Baronet would take credit to himself for that prosperity, and yet it had exercised much influence upon the consumption and the price of food.

MR. VILLIERS said, the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Tyrrell) was innocent of having produced the panic of which he complained when the last Tariff was passed; for if he remembered rightly the hon. Baronet had addressed his constituents on the occasion, giving them the benefit of his practical knowledge on the subject, and which was certainly calculated to allay their fears, for he assured them that he knew that foreign sheep were of that description that any body could read the newspapers clearly through them, and that more than half the pork would be choked on the voyage. Now as they had not much benefit as yet from the Tariff, he was not prepared to say that the hon. Baronet's information was not correct. If such, however, was the case, why should the hon. Baronet be so much alarmed now; and if the panic was such an evil, why should the hon. Baronet endeavour to produce it; and if it did exist, he asked who produced it? Why, he did not hesitate to say it was the hon. Gentlemen opposite; it was just such speeches as they had heard from the hon. Member for Somerset and the hon. Baronet that produced a panic. This was a matter worthy of notice; for if it was impossible to draw their attention to the great interest the people had in the abundance of the necessaries of life, and that nothing could induce them to withdraw their opposition on that ground—let them reflect upon the injury they were inflicting on the very interest that they represented. What was the effect of predicting calamity to follow from this measure? Why, it depreciated the price of the articles in question, and at this moment there was not the least doubt but that the price was kept down by the delay occasioned by the Motions and speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen might cry "Oh!" but the fact was as he represented it, and on the authority of persons in the trade, that a serious loss was sustained by them owing to this measure being suspended. Hon. Gentlemen would have the opportunity of knowing the fact soon; and it would be seen whether he or they were right. They knew perfectly well that the measure would pass, and it would be seen then whether the price of foreign wheat would not rise higher than at this moment; and he put it to the hon. Member for Somerset, who treated every appeal on the score of general interest with indifference, to look at the enormous injury he was inflicting upon the farmers and the dealers whose interests he purposed to represent. He was bound to say that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Somerset put the interest of the consumer entirely out of consideration; for he treated the measure as one of gratuitous mischief wantonly inflicted upon the producer, and assumed that there were no interests, no wants to be consulted or satisfied by its passing. Throughout the hon. Member's speech, and throughout the speech of the hon. Member for Essex, not one syllable had been said as to whether the poor had access to meat now, or whether the reduction of duty might not give it to them, and that in the face of the complaint throughout the agricultural districts, that the poor hardly ever touch meat from one year's end to the other. He did not mean that they had no bacon, but they paid a high price for it; and that was especially enumerated by the hon. Member for Somerset as one of the articles that in future would be too cheap; and this was the year, too, in which they had heard a labourer complaining that for forty years he had never but once touched a morsel of meat owing to its price. Why, it was notorious that the agricultural labourers could not afford meat for their families; and if it were not, the rate of their wages would show that it was impossible; and yet here hon. Gentlemen and hon. Baronets were endeavouring to make meat dear and scarce. He really knew nothing more astounding than to sit there in what was called a Christian assembly — an assembly of Gentlemen, not apt to underrate their own benevolence, and whose kind care for the poor nobody was allowed to question; and to hear them one after the other depicting the horrors of plenty, while they endeavoured to raise the price of subsistence and keep food from the poor. Who could have supposed, after all the display of feeling last night about milliners and dressmakers, and the night before about poor framework knitters, who were said to be starving, that night the same Gentlemen would be using the same exertions to deprive them of wholesome food; and as their wages were low, to make their sufferings more intense. Their condition was actually bad, and had been so for years. It was not the prediction of what it would be after trade was free. To prevent food being cheap, therefore, was a positive evil to them as they were. Really, to hear the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Allix), and the hon. Member for Somerset, one would suppose that the poor depended for

life upon clover, and never desired to eat bacon. The hon. Member for Cambridge was quite pathetic about protecting clover on account of the poor; and the hon. Member for Somerset was horrified at the abundance of bacon that might be poured into this country from America. He believed that the hon. Gentlemen were confounding themselves with the poor when they talked about clover. It was they who were always living in clover; while the poor would be happy to exchange all the clover they had for all the bacon they could get. The hon. Member for Rutlandshire (Mr. Finch) said, he expected to have fair play at the hands of free traders; and he hoped he would give them credit also for common humanity, for that was their reason for advocating a change of system, to enable the poor to escape at least from scarcity of food. The hon. Member for Rutlandshire had turned to this side to have his fears about this measure allayed; but really his own political economy ought to have done that for him without their help. At what time did the hon. Member apprehend danger from removing the duty? Why, when the prices were low here—that was the time, he said, when swarms of cattle would come in, that was when the market was bad; he did not want a duty when the price was high—only when it was lower than in other countries. Why, surely the hon. Gentleman's own sense should show him that unless the price were higher here than in other parts of the world, the cattle would not come here at all. The hon. Gentleman the other night wanted to know what would be the price of his wheat if the Corn Law was repealed: and now he wanted to know what his cattle would fetch. Why, surely it was enough to console him for to-night when he reflected that if the worst happened, it must be higher here than in any other part of the world, for its being so was the inducement to bring it hither. This, however, was particularly the time during which the hon. Member apprehended danger from the change; and why? Why, because, the hon. Gentleman said, the cattle had had the murrain, because it was unusually scarce, because people had less in this country than usual; that was the time, he said, when the consumer should be especially precluded from getting it elsewhere. Really, he wished the hon. Gentleman would reflect upon the chance he would have of satisfying the consuming public of the justice of such a reason; and having with his friends, eased their conscience by raising their voice against a plentiful supply, he did hope, for the credit of the House, that they would not press this singular Motion to a division.

Sir J. TROLLOPE said, that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had referred to a prediction made by the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Miles), which had not been verified; but the hon. Baronet himself had made predictions and promises which should be placed within the memory of the House. He recollected the right hon. Baronet saying most distinctly, that the people of the country would be enabled to save the whole amount of the Income Tax out of the reductions caused by the Tariff. Now, if hon. Members were allowed to rise on the other side of the House and state that the protectionist Members were answerable for the appearance of the panic, the right hon. Baronet should also take his share of the falsifications of the predictions he had made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had alluded to an experiment which had been made with reference to the feeding of cattle on malt. How and where the experiment had been conducted he was not aware. It could not have been made by the agriculturists themselves, for the excisemen stopped the course of all experiments of that nature made by farmers. Though allowed to steep barley, they were not allowed to resort to the drying process, whereby alone could he determine the question of malt feeding. But, looking at the general question, the protectionists might perhaps have looked too gloomily upon the effects they feared would result from the introduction of foreign cattle. They, however, were not to be blamed for this, because they relied on the statements of gentlemen who had gone abroad, and were capable, therefore, of estimating the effects likely to flow from a facility afforded to importation. It was but natural that the protectionists feared the adoption of free trade measures, when it was supposed they would take place all at once. An hon. Member on the other side, the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), instead of addressing himself to the question before the House, had indulged himself with a speech on the Corn Laws. The hon. Member was severe on the Conservatives in that House, because, he said, the protectionists were desirous of limiting the supply of food to the poorer classes of the commu-

nity. That, however, was a mis-statement of the real condition of things. The protectionists had no wish to limit the supply of food. What they wanted was an abundant supply; but they were desirous that that supply should come from the soil and the agriculturists of this country. The protectionists also contented that the soil of England could supply abundance. It was the course taken by the Legislature which checked the proper supply. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would find that as much fluctuation would follow the reduction on corn, as had followed the Tariff on cattle. If the fears of producers were excited, the supply would be checked, and prices would ultimately rise.

MR. BORTHWICK: The hon. Member for Wolverhampton had asked the protectionist side of the House how it came to pass, as they had divided the House in favour of the labouring classes, they could yet unite for keeping up the price of the food of the labouring classes. The hon. Gentleman had made a speech the beginning of which contradicted the end. He had himself said, "Pass this measure, and corn will rise;" and then he followed by saying, "How can you (meaning the agricultural Members of the House) knowing that the agricultural labourers are not capable of purchasing animal food, attempt to keep up the price even of their bread?" The hon. Member for Wolverhampton said, "Pass the Bill for Corn Law repeal and the Tariff, and the prices of agricultural produce will be enhanced." How, then, does the hon. Member hope to cheapen the food of milliners, of whom the House had heard something the previous evening, or any other persons? But that was not the only strange argument alleged during the present debate. In the year 1842 the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had passed the Tariff under which foreign cattle had been imported into the country. The hon. Baronet had then told the House, with reference to Spain—it being believed that that country, by reason of her fertile soil, would be able to export a large number of cattle to England—that the House might rely on his promise when he said not a single hoof would cross the Bay of Biscay. Yes, the right hon. Baronet had stated this; but the fact did not bear out his statement, and a large number of cattle did cross the Bay of Biscay, and did find an entrance into Great Britain. Arguments of equal value were made at the present period. True, it might have been that cattle, like all other produce, did not enter at once in large numbers, because it occupied some years to perfect arrangements for breeding; but, nevertheless, cattle from foreign countries had made their appearance in Great Britain from other lands in considerable numbers; and the Premier's promise that not a hoof would pass the Bay of Biscay, had not been verified. If cattle were to be imported, why not import them lean, to allow the English grazier to fatten them? Another strange statement made by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was this—he said the wages of the agricultural labourer were exceedingly low; but did he propose to increase the wages of those persons by depreciating the productions of their industry? Yet such was the object of those Gentlemen who sat opposite and called for the repeal of the laws on corn, and for the introduction of cattle free of duty. The hon. Member said, the effect of the intended measure would both be to increase and diminish the amount of wages. He should, however, have stated which effect would be produced. Both arguments would not do. At first the hon. Member said one thing, and then he said another; but it would be well to know precisely what he meant. This was necessary if an argument upon facts or assertions was to be followed out. It was, however, impossible to fix the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League to any point. That body had not succeeded in many of their undertakings; but in one object they had been successful, namely, that of converting two Cabinets, but by what means was to him wholly unknown. The members of the Anti-Corn-Law League had said, in effect, that they intended to increase the prosperity of all classes by the depreciation of all classes. Such was really the argument used by them. It was said by political economists that the prosperity of all classes was founded on the prosperity of agriculture. Divided as this country was from others, he could not imagine the theory of free trade could be expected to be carried out without injury to those interests engaged in it. If the theory of Napoleon Bonaparte were realized—supposing that only one Exchequer existed, into which the taxation of every country in Europe was payable, then, perhaps, free trade might be carried into effect without injury, because the whole of Europe would then be but one country. But when the funded debt of England was so enormous as it

was, and the annual taxation 54,000,000*l.*, he could only refer to the statement of Lord Melbourne, when that noble Lord observed that in the present condition of the country the man who meditated a repeal of the Corn Law was but a madman. Now, as respected the immediate question before the House, he could not say that any reason had been shown why the Motion of the hon. Member which stood before the House should be negatived. An argument used had been, that as cattle were brought free into England from Ireland, cattle should also be brought free to this country from all the world. Where, he would ask, were the Irish Members of the House? Should they not be in their places opposing the measure that sought to make Ireland a foreign country, and place its resources on the same foundation as Russian and Polish industry? But he would say no more. He rose for the purpose of asking the hon. Member for Wolverhampton to explain how it was that the argument he had used contradicted itself. Knowing the clearness of apprehension which distinguished that hon. Member, he could not understand how it was that the one and the same measure, at one and the same time, could raise and depress the price of food.

Mr. VILLIERS replied, that what he had said was this, that the inflammatory speeches made by Conservative Gentlemen had had the effect of depressing prices, and that they would rise if the present measure were allowed to pass. The country, it must be remembered, was now suffering under the effect of thirty years' Corn Law, and that pressure must be resumed before the full effect of the change could be known or felt.

Sir J. WALSH observed, that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had attributed personal selfishness to the agricultural Members in the House, and indeed to the agriculturists generally. The agricultural Members in that House were, however, the representatives of a great national interest, upon which the prosperity of all other classes was founded, and therefore they contended that no change could be made detrimental to its condition which would not also prove injurious to all other branches of industry. It was both unfair and unjust in the hon. Member for Wolverhampton to say that agriculturists acted only under the greatest selfishness. The agriculturists and the agricultural Members of that House were acting as fairly as other men, and if the protective Members chose to retort, they might say that Gentlemen asking for the repeal of the Corn Laws only did so to support their own interest, because their own interests were mixed up with the repeal. The agricultural Members might say the Members of the Anti-Corn-Law League were only desirous of filling their own purses. Therefore the protection Members of that House thought the attack made on themselves was an uncalled-for and unjust imputation. He could not agree with the measure, and he was of opinion that it would not tend to the prosperity or the pacification of Ireland. He was fully of opinion that the agitation for the repeal of the Union in that country which had brought the nation to the verge of a civil war, owed its rise to the operation of the Tariff. The Government had this Session been adopting temporary measures for the relief of Ireland, and while they did so, it was strange that they were also attempting to pass measures only aggravating evils they attempted to remove.

Mr. YORKE said, he represented a constituency quite as large as that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and whose interests were quite as important as those of the constituency of the hon. Member for Durham, and he thought that their feelings of alarm were not likely to be allayed by the language used by those hon. Members. He (Mr. Yorke) rose, merely for the purpose of saying that the reason for the price of cattle being so low in former years, was the general failure of the peculiar crops on which cattle were fed. The consequence of this failure was, that one-fourth more cattle were thrown on the market, and the prices became so small as to be scarcely anything. Now there were enormous green crops, and the farmers kept their cattle for store instead of sending them in for consumption. With respect to the probable supply, he had no faith in the professions of Government, as he recollected that on a former occasion, 10,000 head of cattle were fixed as the highest number likely to be imported under the Tariff, and he also recollected how that prophecy had been falsified. He should therefore resist this Resolution, as he should everything tending to diminish protection on British agriculture.

Sir C. KNIGHTLEY said, that great ravages had been made among cattle by disease. He had himself lost thirty oxen by disease, and his tenants had lost many. This had caused high price. A project,

however, was on foot, which would tend to make Smithfield one of the worst markets in the kingdom. A company of merchants had hired iron steamers for the purpose of trading between this country and Russia, and when it was recollected the bullocks were so plentiful in that country that they were slaughtered for fat only, if a railroad were opened between Moscow and St. Petersburgh, an immense quantity of beasts would be brought from the interior for exportation to Great Britain. If this followed, breeders in this country would be as much reduced as the country would be injured by the measures of the Government. He should give such measures his strenuous opposition.

MR. C. BRUCE contended, that the breeders of cattle in this country would be injured by the measures of the Government. In 1844, the number of cattle imported was 159; in 1845, the number was 4,920; and in 1846, 16,870 were imported.

LORD G. BENTINCK: I will not join in the apprehension that any large quantity of cattle will be imported into this country; and a duty of 1*l.* per head is not more than a duty of 10 per cent, which I do not think prohibitory. But the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton has stated that the poor of this country, as a body, scarcely ever taste meat. Let me, however, remind the hon. Member that the people of England eat more meat than the people of any other country—the average quantity per head being 92 lbs. in this country, whilst it is not more than 50 lbs. in others; and when the hon. Gentleman turns round, and says we wish to starve the people of England—that we wish to deprive them of the means of eating the meat which the people of other nations enjoy, I must say that it is an allegation which has no sort of foundation in fact. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, too, has said that it is we who keep down the price of grain by delaying the passing of these measures. Now, I am aware that it is said by some parties, in order to serve their own purposes, that the more you increase the supplies in proportion to the demand, the higher will be the price of provisions; but that is a doctrine which has never been promulgated by any Gentleman of common understanding until now. The hon. Gentleman says further, that this measure of the Government must pass into a law. But, Sir, I do not know that; and, on the contrary, so far as I am informed, I believe there is good cause for hoping that whatever may have been the conduct of hon. Gentlemen on this (the Conservative) side of the House, although they may have abandoned their principles and deserted their party, there is yet another House of Parliament which will not so disgrace itself; and I apprehend that, if the other House of Parliament should reject this measure, and there should be an appeal to the country, if I may be allowed to form a judgment from the results of the appeals which have recently been made to the constituencies of Gloucestershire, Dorsetshire, and Northamptonshire—if I may judge from similar results in my own native county, this (the protection) party, who have honestly stood by their pledges, and not broken their faith, who have not participated in the disgrace of breaking the faith of Parliament, of dishonouring the Parliament of this country; I am much mistaken, I say, if this party will not come back to this House greatly strengthened by the support of those constituencies that have been betrayed during the present session.

The Committee divided on the Question that Oxen and Bulls stand part of the Resolution:—Ayes 111; Noes 72: Majority 39.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Duncan, G.
Aldam, W.	Duncombe, T.
Baine, W.	Dundas, Adm.
Bannerman, A.	Ebrington, Visct.
Barclay, D.	Elphinstone, H.
Barnard, E. G.	Escott, B.
Berkeley, hon. C.	Ewart, W.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.	Fitzroy, hon. H.
Blewett, R. J.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Botfield, B.	Forster, M.
Bowles, Adm.	Gore, hon. R.
Bowring, Dr.	Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Bright, J.	Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Brotherton, J.	Greene, T.
Browne, hon. W.	Grosvenor, Lord R.
Bruges, W. H. L.	Hamilton, Lord C.
Buller, C.	Hanmer, Sir J.
Busfeild, W.	Hatton, Capt.
Cardwell, E.	Hawes, B.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.	Heathcoat, J.
Chapman, B.	Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Hill, Lord M.
Cochrane, A.	Hogg, J. W.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.	Hope, G. W.
Corry, rt. hon. H.	Howard, P. H.
Cripps, W.	James, Sir W. C.
Dalrymple, Capt.	Jocelyn, Visct.
Dashwood, G. H.	Kelly, Sir F.
Dennistoun, J.	Kelly, J.
Dickinson, F. H.	Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Langston, J. H.
Duke, Sir J.	Loch, J.
Duncan, Visct.	Lockhart, A. E.

M'Geachy, F. A.
M'Neill, D.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martyn, C. W.
Mitchell, T. A.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morison, Gen.
Neville, R.
O'Brien, J.
Ord, W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Philips, G. R.
Phillpotts, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Price, Sir R.
Protheroe, E.
Russell, Lord J.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Smith, B.
Somers, J. P.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Turner, E.
Villiers, hon. C.
Villiers, Visct.
Warburton, H.
Wawn, J. T.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Young, J.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Allix, J. P.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.
Arkwright, G.
Baillie, H. J.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, Major
Borthwick, P.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Cayley, E. S.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Farnham, E. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Forman, T. S.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Granby, Marq. of
Halford, Sir H.
Halsey, T. P.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Hudson, G.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Knightley, Sir C.
Lawson, A.
Lefroy, A.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Mackenzie, T.
Manners, Lord C. S.
March, Earl of
Maunsell, T. P.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Palmer, G.
Plumptre, J. P.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, Sir H.
Stanley, E.
Thompson, Ald.
Tower, C.
Turnor, C.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.
Miles, W.
Trollope, Sir J.

On the Question—

"That 'Hides, or pieces thereof, tawed, curried, varnished, japanned, enamelled, Muscovy, or Russia Hides, or pieces thereof, tanned, coloured, shaved, or otherwise dressed, and Hides, or pieces thereof, in any way dressed, not otherwise enumerated,' stand part of the Resolution—

MR. LAWSON said, he was one of those who, in 1842, had supported the Government in their proposal to reduce the duty on foreign hides, because it was said that the reduction of that duty would benefit the labouring classes, in reference to the price they would have to give for their shoes and boots. But he found that, on the contrary, the price of leather, to the working classes had not decreased in consequence of the measure of 1842, whilst an injury had been done to the agricultural interest. The present proposition related, too, not only to raw hides, but to curried hides also; and this was an additional reason why he should, as he now begged to do, move the omission of the article from the Resolution.

SIR J. TYRRELL, in seconding the Amendment of the hon. Member, said, that his object in rising had been to state to the House a fact which had come to his knowledge in the course of the last few days, and which had been represented to him by a clergyman of the county he had the honour to represent, namely, the fact of a most respectable tanner in that county having within a very short time turned off no fewer than ten of his workmen; and he contemplated the dismissal of as many more. One fact, it was a common observation, was worth a thousand arguments; and, therefore, he had thought it his duty to name this striking one to the House. These workmen had been—they and their fathers before them—in the employment of this respectable tanner and his predecessors for the last hundred years. Now, he should like to be told by some Member of Her Majesty's Government, what was the process by which these industrious tanners were now to be employed? How were they to use the free-trade phraseology of the day, to be "absorbed?" He presumed that the workhouse would alone be enabled to tell the tale of these poor men's industrious endeavours, vain as they now must be, to support their wives and families. He believed that they had been in the habit of attending the Anti-Corn-Law meetings, and of hearing the statements of the League lecturers, that the advantages of having the cheap loaf would be so great as to cover all other difficulties they might meet with, and that it would be a great advantage to working tanners to have the free importation of foreign hides. He knew that the answer which hon. Gentlemen opposite gave to cases of this kind was, that free trade in corn would cure all the

disadvantages under which the workmen might labour—that the measure of the Government was a great and comprehensive measure; and he doubted not that they would refuse to condescend to tell the House why it was that these poor tanners were to be exposed to this hard reverse; still, he asked, and with some curiosity, on what employment it was that these parties were now to be enabled to bestow their labour and skill, in order to gain an honest livelihood?

SIR G. CLERK said, the case to which the hon. Gentleman had referred afforded a strong illustration of what had been already urged in that House, that while it remained a matter of uncertainty what would be the issue of the Government measure, every trade would be paralysed. The cheapening of leather must necessarily benefit the shoemakers of this country, and enable them to compete successfully with those of France. What was the effect of the reduction of the duty in 1842? Why, the importation of foreign hides in 1843 was 585,000 cwt., which was increased in 1844 to 637,000 cwt.; and last year, 719,000 cwt. If, however, he was told by the hon. Member that the price of boots and shoes had not been reduced by the reduction of the duty, he would have the hon. Member consider what would have been the price of boots and shoes and of every other article made of leather if the admission of foreign hides had been resisted altogether. The fact was, that in ordinary times the power of consumption in this country increased in a more rapid ratio than the means of supplying the demand. It was quite true that the price of leather had not been reduced; and seeing this to be the case, with the reduction already made, was it not the bounden duty of the Government, not only to protect the shoe trade of this country, but also to enable the consumer of these articles to obtain them at a lower price, by allowing leather in a dressed state to come in duty free? Now, he did not entertain any feelings of danger to the tanners in England by the proposed reduction. He asked, with the skill which this country possessed, what was to prevent the tanners from producing leather as cheap and as good as any country in the world? This country possessed peculiar facilities for the manufacture of leather which no other country in the world had. This was another case in which, he believed, not a single representation had been made by persons connected with the leather trade against the proposed reduction of duty. Last year, when it was proposed to take the duty off tanned leather, the tanners complained that the reduction would place them in a very disadvantageous position, in consequence of the price of provisions. They said, that if protection was reduced upon corn and provisions, they would not then be at all afraid of competing with the leather manufactures of any part of the world. Under those circumstances, he was convinced that the measures now proposed by Her Majesty's Government would meet with the hearty concurrence of those Gentlemen who last year remonstrated against the reduction upon leather. The Gevernment, at any rate, would have the satisfaction of knowing that by the reduction they were enabling the poor man to procure these necessary articles at a more moderate rate than he had hitherto done.

The Committee divided on the original Question — Ayes 130; Noes 74: Majority 56.

List of the AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Elphinstone, H.
Aglionby, H. A.	Escott, B.
Aldam, W.	Etwall, R.
Baine, W.	Ewart, W.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.	Feilden, W.
Barnard, E. G.	Ferguson, Col.
Berkeley, hon. C.	Fitzroy, hon. H.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.	Fitzroy, Lord C.
Blewitt, R. J.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.
Bodkin, W. H.	Forster, M.
Botfield, B.	Gore, hon. R.
Bowles, Adm.	Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Bowring, Dr.	Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Bright, J.	Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Brotherton, J.	Grosvenor, Lord R.
Browne, hon. W.	Hall, Sir B.
Bruce, Lord E.	Hamilton, Lord C.
Bruges, W. H. L.	Hanmer, Sir J.
Buller, C.	Hatton, Capt. V.
Busfeild, W.	Hayter, W. G.
Cardwell, E.	Heathcoat, J.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.	Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Chapman, B.	Hill, Lord M.
Childers, J. W.	Hindley, C.
Clay, Sir W.	Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Hogg, J. W.
Cochrane, A.	Hope, G. W.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.	Howard, P. H.
Collett, J.	James, Sir W. C.
Crawford, W. S.	Jocelyn, Visct.
Dalrymple, Capt.	Kelly, Sir F.
Dashwood, G. H.	Kelly, J.
Dennistoun, J.	Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Dickinson, F. H.	Langston, J. H.
Duke, Sir J.	Layard, Capt.
Duncan, Visct.	Loch, J.
Duncan, G.	Lockhart, A. E.
Duncombe, T.	Macaulay, rt. hon. T. B.
Dundas, Adm.	M'Carthy, A.
Easthope, Sir J.	M'Geachy, F. A.
Ebrington, Visct.	M'Neill, D.

Mahon, Visct.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Meynell, Capt.
Mitchell, T. A.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morris, D.
Neville, R.
O'Brien, J.
Ord, W.
Osborne, R.
Paget, Col.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pennant, hon. Col.
Philips, G. R.
Plumridge, Capt.
Price, Sir R.
Protheroe, E.
Rawdon, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Sheridan, R. B.
Smith, B.
Smyth, Sir H.
Somers, J. P.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, H.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Turner, E.
Villiers, hon. C.
Villiers, Visct.
Warburton, H.
Wawn, J. T.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Young, R.
Cripps, W.

List of the NOES.

Acton, Col.
Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Astell, W.
Bateson, T.
Benett, J.
Bennett, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Beresford, Maj.
Borthwick, P.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Clayton, R. R.
Clifton, J. T.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Dick, Q.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Farnham, E. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Frewen, C. H.
Fuller, A. E.
Gardner, J. D.
Gooch, E. S.
Goring, C.
Granby, Marq. of
Grogan, E.
Halford, Sir H.
Halsey, T. P.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hope, Sir J.
Hudson, G.
Hurst, R. H.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Knightley, Sir C.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Maunsell, T. P.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Neeld, J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Palmer, G.
Plumptre, J. P.
Rashleigh, W.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rolleston, Col.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Stanley, E.
Thompson, Ald.
Trollope, Sir J.
Turnor, C.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wodehouse, E.
Worcester, Marq. of
Wynn, Sir W. W.
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.
Lawson, A.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.

On the Question—

"'That Linen, viz., Plain Linens and Diaper, whether chequered or striped with Dye Yarn or not, and Manufactures of Linen, or of Linen mixed with Cotton, or with Wool, not particularly enumerated, or otherwise charged with Duty, not being articles wholly or in part made up,' stand part of the Resolution"—

MR. LAWSON said, he regretted being obliged to rise so soon again, but he could not discharge his duty faithfully if he permitted a Resolution to pass which would have the effect of injuring the interests of his constituents, without recording his opposition against it. In rising to do so, he felt bound to state that he was not actuated by any representations from the master manufacturers, for as far as they were concerned, he believed the growth of home flax rendered them able to compete with foreigners in the manufacture of linen. But while he made this statement, he could not forget the large class of labourers who were employed under the master manufacturers, and who would be injured by any reduction in the price of the manufactured article. He could not disguise his belief that the master manufacturers could successfully compete with the foreigner; but such competition could only be maintained by an immediate reduction in the wages paid to the labourer. He did not make this assertion on a mere supposition, but from facts which had actually occurred a short time since. During the late recess a deputation of poor men waited upon him, who stated that they and their families had been thrown out of work for this reason, that the master manufacturers had promised them an increase of 10 per cent upon their wages, but that they had subsequently confessed prices were so low they could not make the advance they had been led to hope they would be able to do. The consequence was that those poor men left their employment and had called upon him for a subscription to enable them to continue holding out against their masters. The answer he returned to the deputation was, that though the masters had not been his political friends in the borough, still he could not depart from a principle he had ever maintained, namely, that he would not support any class of men against their employers. He believed he could safely say that what those men had stated to him was strictly correct, viz., that they expected an increase of 10 per cent upon their wages—that they could not get it, and that they had quitted their employment in consequence, and were then out of work. Instead of aiding those persons by a subscription in order to hold out against their employers, he had found work for them, which was, he considered, a much more salutary

mode of relief. If the master manufacturers could not now pay fair and remunerating prices, how could they do so if a further reduction of 10 per cent should take place; and if the master manufacturers could not continue their competition, what would become of the handloom weavers? On the present occasion he would not trouble the House with many observations, as he did not intend to divide the Committee upon it, but, at the same time, if he had not remonstrated against the Resolution, he should consider he had not done his duty to his constituents. It was his intention upon the present occasion, and upon all similar occasions, to give his vote in favour of protection to domestic industry; and he hoped it would not be considered disparaging to his character if he defended Knaresborough linen against German, or any other article of native produce against foreign. He should, in common with the Gentlemen who occupied seats round him, at least have the satisfaction of knowing that, however great might be the majority against them, they had supported those measures which they considered were the best for the welfare and prosperity of the country.

MR. DUNCAN said, that although he represented a manufacturing community, comprising not less than 70,000 persons who were engaged in the linen trade, he was prepared to support the proposition brought forward by Her Majesty's Ministers. He was perfectly convinced that he was speaking the sentiments of the whole of the linen manufacturers of Scotland, when he declared that they were anxious that everything in the shape of duty should be taken off, and that nothing in the semblance of protection should be given to their trade. Concurring as he did most cordially in those views, he should have great pleasure in supporting the proposition of the Government now before the House.

Question agreed to.

On the 6th Resolution—

"That, from and after the 5th day of April 1847, the Duties of Customs now payable upon the Foreign Goods under mentioned shall cease and determine, and that in lieu thereof there shall be charged the following Duties on such Foreign Goods on their importation into the United Kingdom, viz.—

MR. MITCHELL then rose to move his Amendment upon the proposition affecting the Timber Duties. It was—

"To leave out '1847' in order to insert '1846' instead thereof."

The hon. Member said, that the proposed delay in reducing the duties was fraught with disadvantage—that such suspensions were always injurious to all parties, and that the change ought to take place at once. He contended that the Canadian timber interest would not be injured by the reduction of duties—that wood from that Colony would always have the preference over Baltic timber in constructing articles for domestic use, from its superior capabilities for being wrought.

The Question was put that 1847 stand part of the Resolution.

MR. CARDWELL stated, that he would address his observations to the last remarks made by the hon. Gentleman when supporting his Motion. The effect of taking the duty off the article of timber would be to give the whole benefit to the consumer in our own country, and not to the producer. To regulate the time when any reduction ought to be made in such an article, would require much judgment and consideration. He (Mr. Cardwell) thought he could prove the remarks of the hon. Gentleman were calculated to tell against him, rather than to support his argument. The hon. Gentleman had stated that if notices had been given early in the winter, large supplies of timber could have been brought into this market from Prussia and Russia, which could not be the case now. The House had been called upon to determine at what period it was to reduce the duty on timber; but he contended that, both by the first and second statement of the hon. Gentleman, the House of Commons was called on to negative the Amendment. The period at which a reduction of duties on timber was to commence, had been a matter of mature consideration with the Government; and it had been agreed that the measure proposed was that most likely to prove beneficial. That measure he hoped the House would pass. There were at all periods large stocks in hand, and it certainly ought to be an object of consideration to avoid, on the one hand, injury to those who had large stocks, and, on the other hand, to see that no loss should accrue by adopting an over indulgent view of the case. If the Amendment were carried, it would be decisive on the question, and practically the duties would cease and determine. He would only submit that, on the showing of the hon. Member, and on other grounds, the House ought to resist the Amendment.

SIR J. HANMER begged to say, that a

long time before any change of this kind was in contemplation, or at least known to the public, he had, in consequence of a conversation which he had with some of his constituents, arrived at quite a contrary conclusion from that of the hon. Member (Mr. Mitchell). He (Sir J. Hanmer) concurred in the views taken by the Government, believing they were based upon a sound principle.

Mr. MITCHELL would not trouble the House by dividing.

The Question agreed to.

On the Question that the House do agree with the Committee on the said Resolution,

Lord G. BENTINCK said, that as it might not be possible to finish the debate on timber that night, inasmuch as it might occupy six hours, it would, he thought, be convenient for all parties to adjourn the debate on timber to Friday next.

Debate adjourned till Friday.

House adjourned at half-past Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 18, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—2°· Mutiny; Marine Mutiny.

3°· and passed. Out-Pensioners' Services (Chelsea and Greenwich).

Petitions Presented. By Viscount Ebrington, from Inhabitants of the Town of Wellington, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—From Citizens of Limerick, for Abolition of Ministers' Money (Ireland).—From Inhabitants of the Town of Ross, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Captain Pechell, from John Quail, M.D., for the Liquidation of Portuguese Claims.

FEVER (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Order of the Day for the House resolving itself into a Committee of the whole House on the Fever (Ireland) Bill being read,

Mr. P. SCROPE rose to move, pursuant to his Notice—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee, that they have power to make provision therein that the Guardians of the several Poor Law Unions in Ireland be required to relieve with food all such destitute persons within their Unions as may be in danger of perishing from want, or from disease the consequence of want."

The hon. Member said, that, in moving this Instruction, he had no wish whatever to obstruct the progress of a Bill which might be, and no doubt was, most desirable to be passed in the present critical condition of Ireland; at the same time, the House had not yet heard any statement from the Government as to the reasons why this measure had not been brought forward at a much earlier period; and he was anxious, though not an Irish Member, to address to the House a few observations, with a view to prove, in the first place, that the Bill, if wanted, ought to have been introduced much earlier; and secondly, that being introduced, the measure ought to have gone a deal further in its provisions than those provisions at present stood. It was necessary that in the outset he should call to the recollection of the House the nature of the Poor Laws at present existing and in force in Ireland. In the year 1837, the first provision for the maintenance of the destitute poor in Ireland was made by the Legislature; and in that measure the machinery of the English Poor Law was copied to a very great extent. The same, or a similar, organization was established; the country was divided into Unions; boards of guardians were appointed; and a set of officers, denominated wardens, but whose duties corresponded with those of relieving officers in this country, were established; and lastly, workhouses, which were now nearly completed, were ordered to be built. The distinction between the Irish and the English Poor Law Acts consisted of two points—first, that by the former there was no power to give outdoor relief; and, secondly, that on the face of the Act, it did not appear that indoor relief was compulsory, even in case of the most extreme destitution. It appeared that, in the course of the last autumn, the failure of the potato crops in Ireland, which attracted so much general attention and sympathy, came under the notice of Her Majesty's Government; and he could not but think that, considering the extensive organization of the Poor Law Unions in Ireland, it would have been a wise precaution on the part of the Government to have thrown upon the local authorities in those Unions the responsibility of providing for the coming emergency, the Government itself superintending the efficiency of the preparations, and, at the same time, informing the local boards that, on the meeting of Parliament—he thought the emergency would have justified, calling it specially together—measures would be brought forward for the purpose of requiring, authorizing, and enabling the boards of guardians and the local authorities to provide for the necessary maintenance of the destitute poor,

whom the failure of the potato crops might have reduced to the extremity of distress and suffering. This, however, had not been done; and the House and the country were ignorant of the steps which had been taken by the Government, with the exception of the fact that 100,000 quarters of American oats had been purchased to supply the immediate wants of the population of Ireland. He did not wish to disparage this proceeding on the part of the Government; but he must observe that he held to the opinion that the first resource for the people of Ireland, which should have been looked to on the failure of the potato crops, should have been the oats which they themselves had grown by the side of their potatoes, and that the burden should have been thrown upon the Unions of taking care that a sufficient stock of those oats should have been stored to provide against necessity: and he earnestly hoped that the introduction which had been made of American corn into Ireland would not lead to the expectation on the part of the boards of guardians, or of private individuals, that corn grown in their own neighbourhood might be safely exported, instead of being reserved as a stock sufficient to meet the pressing demands of the people for food. He made this observation, because he had seen with great alarm the enormous extent to which the exportation of oats from Ireland had taken place since the last harvest, and the failure of the potato crops. From returns made up to the 5th February last, he found that the imports into England from Ireland, since the last harvest, amounted to about 258,000 quarters of wheat, to 701,000 cwt. of flour, besides barley—indeed the amount of imports of wheat and barley was in value something like 1,000,000*l.* In addition, there appeared to have been imported from Ireland about 1,000,000 quarters of oats and oatmeal, all since the failure of the potato crops; and though the returns from which he derived this information only reached to the 5th February, the same thing had been going on for the last six weeks in the same extraordinary ratio; and he, therefore, hoped that amongst the means provided by the Government to meet the impending crisis, there had been directions given for storing a sufficient stock of the produce of the bountiful harvest of oats which had been sent by Providence, as though expressly to meet the failure of the crops of potatoes. The Government had, however, undertaken the responsibility—and he gave them full credit for the ample manner in which that responsibility had been admitted—of seeing that no individual should be allowed to starve in Ireland for want of food; but he still thought it would have been much better to have left the responsibility upon the local authorities. The House had heard from the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, that he placed great reliance on the voluntary assistance of the landed proprietors. He owned that to him the dependence to be there placed appeared of a very brittle and frail character. In some districts, probably, assistance would be afforded; but he knew that, in others, the landowners would receive the full amount of their rents, which they would carry into foreign lands, and not return a single farthing towards the relief and maintenance of their suffering tenantry. How, then, was such a state of things to be met, but by making their contributions compulsory? It was so, not only in England, but, he believed, in almost every part of North Europe. Circumstances were occurring at the present moment in Ireland which clearly showed that reliance could not be placed upon the voluntary principle to which the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had alluded on a former occasion. Could it be denied that accounts were daily reaching this country that in Ireland, even at this period of impending famine, the eviction of the tenantry was going on? That so far from the poor being supported during the existing emergency by their landlords, their dwellings had been levelled with the ground, and they themselves driven to swell the daily increasing masses of destitution and misery which crowd the towns of Ireland? That very morning he had seen a statement of a most harrowing description. It came from Roscommon, and asserted "that, to add to the misery of the wretched peasantry, day after day we hear of hundreds of families being turned out of their homes. Yesterday one lady dispossessed 447 wretched beings; one poor woman with a child in her arms had not time to make her escape from the cabin which was being pulled down, and a piece of timber falling upon her killed the infant in her arms."* Upwards of 2,000 human beings had been

* It is proper to notice that the passage in the text was correctly quoted by Mr. Scrope from the *Roscommon Journal*; but the circumstances of a child having been killed in the arms of its mother was afterwards contradicted.

turned out by the same lady and her husband within the last few years. Now he (Mr. P. Scrope) asked if this was not a case which justified the introduction of the compulsory principle for which he contended? From another account he found that, "in Mullingar, nineteen families had been ejected;" and at Killmallock, in the county of Limerick, forty families had shared a similar fate, and prayers had been offered up in the chapels to "give them patience under their sufferings." [Sir J. GRAHAM: Where do you find these statements?] Perhaps they were exaggerated; and he admitted that he had only newspaper authority for them; but could it be denied that evictions in Ireland were still going on, or that the clearance system—well authenticated in the blue books of Parliamentary Committees, and which he wished an endeavour to be made to stop it—was one which had been going on for years in Ireland? He repeated that the contributions of the landed proprietors ought to be compulsory. It was said that since the establishment of the Irish Poor Law no necessity for change existed. That might be the case if the boards of guardians were compelled by law to maintain their poor; but so far from that being the practice, he was afraid that the refusal to admit to indoor relief very frequently was maintained until the very large stage of destitution had arrived. In corroboration of this assertion, he would quote a case well known to some hon. Members, from the Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners for the year 1845. It was the case of David Broadley, of Carrick-upon-Shannon, who, after repeated applications for and refusals of relief, about the middle of the preceding month of December ended his days on the high road, where his body was left the whole of the next day (Sunday) as a spectacle to the people passing to and returning from church. The board of guardians of the Carrick-on-Shannon Union had been very properly reprimanded by the Poor Law Commissioners; but he asked what security existed that similar circumstances might not again occur under the pressure of the crisis which was now fast approaching—what security was there that similar harrowing cases of absolute death from want might not be multiplied? Besides, even supposing the boards of guardians were to take into the workhouses all who were in a destitute condition, why the workhouses would be soon completely filled, and what resource would there be in the event of that emergency occurring? The right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department had stated that means would be employed to put the population to work. In the propriety of the adoption of that resource he entirely agreed. He saw some value in the measures which had already been passed during the present Session for the purpose of giving effect to that proposition; but he would suggest that a Bill for the reclamation of waste lands might well be added to those which had already received the sanction of the Legislature with respect to fisheries and drainage. The waste lands, both bogs and mountains, would, he thought, afford means of employment, with a small outlay, to a considerable advantage. Still these measures only referred to the relief of the able-bodied poor, while it could not be forgotten that in Ireland there was an enormous class of the population which was unable to work for their own maintenance. How was it proposed to relieve that class, which comprised the aged, the sick, cripples, widows and orphans, and all those who came within the designation of impotent poor—a class which numbered hundreds of thousands. The workhouses in Ireland, 130 in number, would, he believed, only afford accommodation to about 90,000 persons; and what was to be done, supposing that number was doubled or trebled? Why, then it would be obligatory to afford them outdoor relief. Hence it was that he contended it would be both wise and prudent for the Government to avail themselves of the organized local authorities, and to make it compulsory upon them to take measures for that purpose, and thus satisfy the minds of the people that relief would be afforded to them out of funds taken primarily out of Ireland's own resources. He knew that the Irish proprietors, in alluding to the principle of outdoor relief, spoke of confiscation. They ought not to make use of such a strong expression, or they must expect even stronger terms being applied to themselves. But what did the poor rate in Ireland at present amount to? Why, not to more than 5*d.* or 6*d.* in the pound; while in England the rate was 2*s.* in the pound on the aggregate value of the land. He was reminded that in one district of Ireland the rate amounted to 15*d.* in the pound; but what was that compared with the amount levied in England where it was known that poor rates had at times amounted to 10*s.*, 12*s.*, 15*s.*, and

even to 19*s.* in the pound. Such was the state of things which had been seen in England in times of extreme destitution and starvation. With respect to the question before the House, he repeated that the first requisition ought to be upon the local authorities, who were competent to raise funds by an equal rate on all property, because the voluntary rate which was expected would only be contributed by the benevolent, while the hardhearted absentee, who was unwilling to subscribe would get off "scot free," although probably he possessed more wealth than those upon whom he left the burden. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government spoke on this matter the other day, as though it was desirable to maintain secrecy and mystery. Now he could not understand why there should be any mystery or secrecy about the matter. It seemed to him that every Irishman ought to be informed that he was not in danger of absolute starvation, and that his fears as to a famine ought to be appeased. It appeared to him that a sound Poor Law, securing the maintenance of the destitute, would afford the best means of putting down those outrages which were about to be coerced by some strong and unconstitutional measure. Let provision be made that men shall not be allowed to die in ditches for want—show some respect for the lives of the poorer classes, and that would teach them to respect the lives of others. He did not ask for a permanent measure of compulsory relief, but for a measure to meet the emergency, and which would compel the local authorities to provide funds out of the resources of Ireland, which were amply sufficient for that purpose. On the whole, he felt that the amount required was not such as the landed proprietors of Ireland ought to hesitate to contribute, in order to avert the horrors of want and starvation on the land which they possessed.

MR. S. CRAWFORD seconded the Motion. He disclaimed any wish to throw difficulties in the way of the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government; but he thought it the duty of hon. Gentlemen unconnected with the Government to call the attention of the House to measures which in their judgment the present emergency required. The Government had stated that they took upon themselves the responsibility of providing food for the people of Ireland. He gave the Government credit for so doing; but the measures they had hitherto taken had not proved adequate to meet the emergency; some other measures, therefore, were necessary to be adopted. Reports of Commissioners and of Committees appointed under different Governments, had recommended the adoption of several measures, none of which had hitherto been brought forward. If the recommendations of the Poor Law Commission and the Landlord and Tenant Commission had been attended to, it was his opinion that none of those evils which now existed, would have occurred. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) had said, that in the measures the Government intended to take, it would be impossible for him to succeed without the assistance of the landlords of Ireland, on whose voluntary co-operation he mainly relied. Without wishing to speak harshly of the Irish landlords, he must observe that on former occasions they had generally failed in the discharge of that duty which the Government was desirous to enforce upon them. Many, no doubt, did perform their duty; but many, as unquestionably, neglected to do so. Some compulsory measure, therefore, was required. But the landlords should be encouraged to engage actively in affording assistance at a period of unusual distress. Several measures calculated to give this encouragement had for many years been suggested. One, which had recently been partially acted upon, was, to empower the tenant for life to charge the inheritance with a portion, at least, of any outlay by him which tended to the permanent improvement of the estate. There was a recommendation contained in the Poor Law Commissioners' Report, that the local authorities should be empowered to enforce the improvement of waste lands, and of locating individuals and families on those lands. This would be an achievement of the greatest value. But the recommendation had become a mere dead letter. It was hard that the landlords should be blamed when the Government failed to perform their duty. Then, with respect to the Landlord and Tenant Commission: the Report of that Commission had now been presented for nearly two years; but no positive statement had been made by the Government as to how many of the recommendations of that Commission they intended to adopt. It was true, they had introduced a Drainage Bill; but improvement by drainage was applicable only to a certain description of land. What he wished to see was a general measure for

the general improvement of Ireland. The Bill now before the House provided only for one description of disease—namely, fever. It made no provision for those various diseases which were mentioned in the Reports received, as now afflicting the people of Ireland. [Sir J. GRAHAM: That can be amended in Committee.] Another evil under which Ireland suffered, was the displacement of persons from their holdings. Some provision should be made for the relief of those individuals who were dispossessed of their land. It was to meet this evil that the Poor Law Commissioners recommended that the local guardians should have the power to locate individuals upon unreclaimed lands, making the landlords chargeable for a proportionate part of the expense of doing so. It was necessary that Government should make a bold stand upon this subject; and not adhere so tenaciously to the abstract rights of the landlords. They should make such a disposal of the waste land as the interest of the State required. Government often felt the necessity of interfering with the political rights of the people: they were now acting upon that feeling; and he would not deny that the necessity existed; and in like manner the civil rights of individuals should be made to give way to the public good. Unless some means were provided for giving food to the poor through the medium of the Poor Law establishments, no sufficient relief could be rendered to meet the present exigency. It might be said that this would impose a heavy tax upon the poorer sort of ratepayers. But the answer to that was, that the poorer sort of persons were already relieved from the payment of poors' rates. Tenants in towns, under 4*l.*, were exonerated from that tax. The Government ought to throw the burden directly upon the landlord, and the rich tradesmen, and farmers. Instances of death had been known to ensue from the guardians having refused to make an assessment for the relief of outdoor paupers. The guardians ought to be made responsible in all cases where death ensued from starvation. A law which fell short of imposing this responsibility, instead of being a law for the protection of the poor, deserved to be designated an inhuman law.

SIR J. GRAHAM: I can assure the House that I feel, and constantly have felt, the high responsibility and great disadvantage under which I labour, in dealing with questions of such immense importance, and so deeply affecting the well-being of the great mass of the people of Ireland, in the absence of those of my Colleagues who are more immediately connected with the Irish Government, and, therefore, necessarily possessing that local information, of which I am to a considerable degree ignorant. At the same time I am anxious to state plainly to the House the opinion which I entertain with reference to the important questions which incidentally, and, because incidentally, unfortunately, have been brought under discussion, on a Motion for giving an instruction to a Committee upon a comparatively very limited Motion. I believe it is barely within the rules of the House that such an instruction should be moved with reference to a measure of this description. This Bill is applicable to a limited period, and—although for an important and pressing, still—for a temporary object; I mean for the purpose of giving the means of affording relief in cases of fever in Ireland, arising from the calamity which now threatens that country. The instructions moved by the hon. Member (Mr. Scrope) raises the whole question of relief to the able-bodied at their own homes. [OPPOSITION: No, no!] Yes they do.

MR. P. SCROPE begged to explain. The right hon. Gentleman had misunderstood him. If the precise words of his proposal did not fully express his (Mr. P. Scrope's) meaning, he thought that the speech he had addressed to the House must have done so. He never contemplated giving relief to the able-bodied idle, though destitute, poor. All he wished to be done for them was, that they should be provided with work. He was quite willing to alter his Motion to that effect.

SIR J. GRAHAM: This shows the immense disadvantage which results from a practical departure from the rules of the House. If the hon. Gentleman had moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the existing Poor Law, in Ireland, then he would have adopted exactly the proper course for attaining his object, and we should have known what he aimed at. But owing to a departure from the rules of the House, what has occurred? Why, the very first objection that I make against the Motion, calls up the hon. Gentleman, who says that he is perfectly willing to alter the terms of his instruction. I am willing to take the alternative which he has suggested, and to point out the difficulties arising from them as so amended. But it is not a mere question of the Poor Law that is now under

consideration. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion has raised another question of the highest importance, but having no possible connexion with the very limited measure now before the House, namely, the question affecting the relation of landlord and tenant in Ireland. And this, too, the hon. Gentleman has done in the face of a notice which has been given by the noble Lord the Member for the city of London (Lord J. Russell), who has announced his intention, after Easter, of bringing under the consideration of the House the general condition of the people of Ireland. It is impossible to dissemble—it would be most unwise to attempt to dissemble—that these two questions—the relief of the destitute poor of Ireland, and the relation between landlord and tenant, are the two questions which lie at the root of all the difficulties of governing that country with a view to the happiness and social welfare of the people. I say, again, I think it most unfortunate, especially in the present state of the House, and incidentally, that two such important questions should be discussed. I cannot, however, refrain from making a few short comments upon some of the observations which have been made by the two hon. Gentlemen, the mover and seconder of this instruction. The hon. Mover first complained that measures for the relief of the people of Ireland had not been brought forward at a much earlier period. He stated, that it would have been a great advantage if Parliament had assembled sooner, that the general state of Ireland might have been taken into consideration at an earlier period. Now, the House and country are well aware of the peculiar circumstances under which these measures were introduced. My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury sought to impress upon his Colleagues, early in November, the necessity of adopting, as a Government, certain measures, which he and a portion of his Colleagues were desirous should be brought under the notice of Parliament, even in the course of that month. I will not refer to the transactions of that month, further than to say, that the Government over which my right hon. Friend presided, after long discussions, in which there prevailed differences of opinion, was dissolved. Efforts were then made to form another Administration. The arrangements consequent upon so difficult an undertaking occupied a considerable time; and, finally, the effort was abandoned, and the present Government did not resume its responsibility until the middle of December. The Government then, as reconstructed, had to consider the measures which it would be proper to introduce relating to Ireland. It would have been most unwise to have met Parliament until they had arranged those measures which they intended to ask Parliament to adopt. So much, then, upon the subject of delay. I hope, under all the circumstances, that the delay does not remain unexplained, and that the explanation will be considered satisfactory by this House. I think the hon. Member labours under some misapprehension, if he supposes that there exists no provision by the present law for the relief of poor persons suffering from disease in Ireland. There are no less than four provisions, as the law now stands, for cases of fever. The first provides that the party should be taken into the workhouse. Now, I think that a most dangerous provision to act upon in cases of epidemic fever; as it would be bringing the disease into immediate contact with the poor inmates who were in health. The next provision is, that the sick may be removed from their home to the hospital. But in many instances those hospitals are twenty and thirty miles distant; and if the fever assumed the form of an epidemic, this provision must be considered to be a very imperfect one. Then, the third provision is, that which enables the guardians of Unions to erect fever hospitals in the vicinity of the workhouse. This I consider an admirable provision; and, out of 130 Unions in Ireland, nearly eighty have acted upon it. The fourth provision of the existing law is that which gives a power to the guardians to hire private houses for cases of fever where no hospital exists. Such is the present law; and I certainly did think it expedient that an interval of time should be given to the boards of guardians to consider these provisions, in order that I might ascertain to what extent they were disposed to act upon them. Generally speaking, I have no reason to complain of their intentions. But within the last week the Government has received from the Executive in Ireland, a representation that there is reason to apprehend the spread of fever in that country, which will require an extension of means on the part of the Government to arrest its progress. I am afraid, under the circumstances of the present scarcity of food, or of the unwholesome nature of the food of

the people, that the apprehensions of the Lord Lieutenant are well grounded; and that an extension of the power to provide relief, in cases of fever, is expedient. This Bill has, therefore, emanated from the recommendation of the Executive of Ireland. The hon. Gentleman has complained that I have not stated to the House the provisions of the Bill. I think the provisions lie in a very narrow compass, and are perfectly intelligible. The burden of expense which will arise by the adoption of means to check the spread of fever which is anticipated will be divided, under the circumstances, between the public generally and the ratepayers. The public will pay for the extra-medical attendance; and power will be given to the Lord Lieutenant, on the representation of the Central Medical Board in Dublin, to require the guardians of the Unions—if there should be any unwillingness on their part to act spontaneously—to adopt measures of precaution, either by erecting temporary hospitals, or by hiring buildings within their Unions, wherein fever patients may be received; and where they shall obtain the benefit of medical attendance, and all those medical appliances which their unhappy condition may require. The hon. Gentleman has stated that in his opinion there are various precautions which ought to have been adopted, but which have been neglected by the Government. In the first place, I understood him to complain that the export of corn from Ireland has not been checked or prohibited.

Mr. P. SCROPE: No; that is not what I said. I expressed a hope that Government had taken care that a sufficient stock of corn should be reserved in the neighbourhood where the distress prevailed.

Sir J. GRAHAM: How could the Government check the diminution of corn in Ireland, unless they prohibited the exportation of corn? [Mr. P. Scrope: The Unions might have a stock in hand.] I must repeat that it would be very convenient to the House if the hon. Gentleman would put in the shape of a Bill, or of Resolutions, such measures as he thinks the present emergency requires. I should most willingly receive the suggestions of the hon. Gentleman, and treat them with great respect; but if any check in the present impoverished state of Ireland were to be imposed upon the exportation of the only article which Ireland has for sale, I am greatly mistaken if all the evils of that unhappy country would not be aggravated tenfold. Although I am always disposed to treat the suggestions of the hon. Gentleman, especially on economical subjects, with the greatest respect, yet I certainly am astonished that any proposition to check the exportation of corn from Ireland should have emanated from such an authority. [Mr. P. Scrope: I never said anything of the kind.] Then I have the misfortune of having misunderstood the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. P. SCROPE: I beg again to explain. I said that under the circumstances which had occurred in Ireland, I thought it would have been desirable for the Government to have instructed the local authorities to make preparations for coming events; and that one of those preparations would have been the laying out of a sum of money in the purchasing of a sufficient stock of oats and other corn, to provide food for the destitute poor; but I did not suggest that the Government should have passed any measure to check the exportation of corn from that country.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that was equivalent to a recommendation that there should be a purchase of oats, a forced purchase of oats. But how was such a purchase to be effected? Was it to be done by Government, or out of the poor rates? Either proposition would have had the effect—a most injurious one—of suddenly increasing the demand for the article, and greatly enhancing the price; and not only enhancing the price of the food thus bought for the purposes of charity, but equally raising the price to be paid by those poor persons in Ireland, who were just able to subsist upon oatmeal, instead of potatoes. It would also have had the effect of enhancing the price of the article in all the markets of this country, where it was in general use; and I was about to say, if a reference to another debate were not irregular, that we should see as the effect of the maintenance of the Corn Laws an artificially enhanced price of wheat throughout the United Kingdom, and at the same time, if the proposal of the hon. Gentleman be agreed to, an enhanced price of oats also created by purchases on the public account. A more dangerous proposition it would be scarcely possible to submit to the House, being second only in danger to the first proposition of the hon. Gentleman, which he now disclaims. The hon. Gentleman rests this extraordinary recommendation on two grounds. First, the general ejectment of tenants in Ireland.

And here let me say, it is much to be hoped and desired that the landlords will exercise more than usual forbearance towards their tenantry during the period of calamity which now threatens them; and I am disposed to entertain a confident belief that such will be the case. The hon. Gentleman denies that this has as yet been the case; he asserts that ejectments on a large scale are still occurring. On being asked for proof of the fact, he alludes to a paragraph in a Roscommon paper which he has read, copied in the London papers of this morning; and when pressed for further proof, he deduces the statements of other papers. The second ground on which he argues the recommendation, is the recurrence of a refusal, on the part of the boards of guardians, to grant relief. I myself have not heard that, in the present unfortunate circumstances, there has been any disposition in the boards of guardians in Ireland to proportion their aid to the increased wants of the community. The hon. Member has brought forward a single instance to the contrary, and that instance is recorded in the report of the board of guardians two years ago; but it was such a departure from the usual practice, that it met with the disapprobation of the Commissioners, when it was expressed in so decided a manner, that the hon. Gentleman does not refuse to applaud their conduct. With respect to the asserted deficiency of the measures with which Government proposes to remedy the wide-spread evil, I have stated to the House that the sum of money already voted, or undertaken to be voted, by the Government, subject to the sanction of the House, to accomplish that object, amounts to very nearly 500,000*l*. That is to be applied without delay, and, of course, must have the effect of adding to the means of the people to avert that calamity with which they have been visited. The hon. Gentlemen also has a suggestion in reference to the public works, which he thinks it is requisite to consider, and which we have omitted to notice. He believes that some arrangement might be made for giving additional facilities for the improvement of waste lands in Ireland. I am by no means disposed to deny that such improvements are well worthy of public encouragement; but it is forgotten that, at the present moment, there exist many facilities, subject to certain restrictions which have been already imposed, for obtaining loans from the Exchequer Loan Commissioners for all such works; and there is also, I think, a society in Ireland, incorporated for the very object of carrying out such improvements in waste lands, which has already availed itself of the opportunity presented of obtaining the money demanded for the occasion. It is needless to say that, under present circumstances, the Crown would be most willing to entertain such an offer. I have thus shown that there has been provided by the Legislature, subject to certain conditions which I think salutary and sufficient, the remedy which the hon. Gentleman has adverted to. I come now to what is really the most important circumstance that can be considered in reference to the questions raised by the hon. Gentleman, and that is, whether, under the pressure of a temporary calamity—great as I admit it to be—we should hastily and without mature consideration, completely alter the principles of the Irish Poor Law. The hon. Gentleman says that Government has undertaken a serious responsibility in not meeting the calamity in question, and supplying the exigencies arising from it out of a poor rate levied in Ireland by the boards of guardians, instead of meeting the emergency by grants from the public purse. Certainly I feel with the hon. Gentleman the weight of that responsibility; and if, consistently with my sense of duty, I could have transferred the responsibility and burden to local funds and parties, I can assure the hon. Gentleman and the House, that personally, and indeed on the part of the Government, I should have been happy to be able to take that course. But after having given the subject the most anxious and deliberate consideration, I have come to the conclusion that under present circumstances I could not be a party to any such recommendation. I think it is our bounden duty, in legislating for Ireland, not to legislate with regard to English feelings, English prejudices, and still less with reference to English law, which has long obtained the sanction of usage in this country; but we are bound to consult Irish feelings, Irish habits, Irish laws, as they have existed for centuries, though they may be at variance with the provisions found in the English Statute-book. It is most true that from the reign of Elizabeth, for nearly three centuries, there has been, not indeed a claim for maintenance, but an absolute right to obtain work, and work yielding wages; the poor man may be said to have been indirectly enabled to de-

mand from his locality a supply of food. In Scotland, at a later period, the same principle was admitted, though there might be some difference in administration. [Lord JOHN RUSSELL: The able-bodied have no right to relief in Scotland.] Yes, I admit to the noble Lord that a most important difference existed in the Scotch Poor Law, which gave the impotent poor there only a right to relief, the able-bodied being under no circumstances entitled to it. I have pointed out what was the law of England, what was that of Scotland, which in a most important particular varies from that of England; but it is right also to observe that during three centuries no law for the relief of the Irish poor ever yet found a place on the Statute-book of that country. I don't wish to follow the matter unnecessarily further; still I am bound in my own vindication to touch on a topic or two, when it is proposed by a new law to throw on the land of Ireland the burden of supporting its own labourers. Beyond all question different habits prevail in the two countries. In Ireland mendicancy has not been prohibited even under the Poor Law recently passed with respect to that country, and almsgiving prevails there to a greater extent than in any other country. I don't wish to dwell on differences of religion; but still that is a matter which cannot be omitted from our consideration. The Roman Catholic is the religion generally prevalent in Ireland: the priesthood of that religion are an unmarried priesthood, and they devote their time, their means, everything which can be called their own, to the visiting the sick and the comforting the poor—and this, as I believe, to the great benefit of the poor of Ireland. It must also be remembered that from their peculiar tenets they attach immense importance to almsgiving; and I am disposed to think, that the prevalence of that religion does induce in the social scheme a difference decidedly in favour of the poor. But then let me observe that all sales, all purchases, all leases, all fixed contracts, previous to 1837, when the new Poor Law passed, were fixed on the established usage of the country, that the right of maintenance for the poor was no part of the burdens incident to the land of Ireland. This is an additional and most important element of consideration, in testing the proposal of the hon. Gentleman with reference to the rights of property. Well, then, as relates to the habits of the poor themselves. The proposition of the hon. Member for Stroud is neither more nor less than a recurrence to the labour rate which formerly prevailed in England, and which was an abuse so inveterate and dangerous that it was found necessary to eradicate it even at the expense of much angry feeling excited in several quarters in this community. I shall ever be of opinion that the system of a labour rate, as it existed here, was a frightful evil. I believe that it demoralized the working classes to the greatest possible degree; and that its degrading operation was fatal to their independence. As a tax, too, it was most unjust. Take an illustration of the manner in which it worked. One man resides on his estate, and discharges his duty in an exemplary manner; he gives labour to those able to work, and he supports those who are unable; and, in point of fact, on his property pauperism cannot be said to exist. His next neighbour neglects all the duties I have mentioned. Now the effect of a labour rate is to make the good landlord and his tenants pay for the neglect and maltreatment of the labourers over whose condition they have no control whatever. It has, in fact, this effect—it makes industry, and wealth, which is its consequence, liable for the maintenance of idleness and poverty. When once the idea prevails that a man can shift the burden of his support from himself to his neighbours, however industrious, honest, and independent he may be, if by the force of circumstances he is made dependent for his daily bread on the law, he will be reduced in his own estimation and in the scale of society. The effect of the rate was to make the employers and the employed enemies. Of all the evils of the English Poor Law, none has been more fatally or more clearly ascertained than this; and, therefore, if the proposition of the hon. Member for Stroud is to introduce into Ireland, even in her present most unfortunate position, a labour rate, which English experience has demonstrated to be vicious in principle and destructive in practice, every consideration of policy and equity induces me to oppose the application to temporary evils, of remedies, the permanent effects of which are known to be injurious; and I have stated many other reasons why Government declines the proposition. I look upon it as inconsistent with the welfare of Ireland, with the rights of property in Ireland, and dangerous, in the extreme, to the great body of the

people in that country. I am satisfied, that if you lift these flood-gates, a torrent of pauperism will overflow the land; and I think it not only inconsistent with the rights of owners, but with the independence and welfare of the labourers. I repeat my belief that this evil is only temporary; if temporary it ought to be met by a temporary remedy. And what is that remedy? I say it is to be obtained by aid from the general taxation; and when I say that, I mean by aid to be given from the public Exchequer. It is not aid from England, it is not generosity: I deny that altogether. Ireland contributes to the general taxation; and when the peculiar circumstances of Ireland are considered, it will be allowed that she contributes her fair and just quota: at all events, I would not now regard that question with a very jealous and scrutinizing eye. Then, as Ireland takes her share in the general taxation, her misfortune is to be alleviated by assistance from the public purse. It is not a dole given by England to Ireland: it is from the resources of the United Kingdom, of which she is an integral part, that aid is to come. I do also most certainly hope, and I may say I believe, that the sympathy and kindness which the British Legislature has evinced in her hour of need towards Ireland, will produce a favourable impression on the hearts and minds of the people of that country. I trust it will prove to them that British connexion is not onerous, but advantageous. I am happy to see that that effect has already been produced. It has been asserted that England's infirmity is Ireland's opportunity; but it will not be now denied that Ireland's infirmity has also been England's opportunity—that we have shown an eager sympathy for her sufferings, and an earnest desire to allay them. As to the imposition of any land tax, as suggested, I must object to it; for I believe it would be unjust and impolitic in the extreme to use this opportunity to add another burden to an impoverished people. This Bill is limited in point of time; and to that extent I do not believe the measure, so limited, will be resisted. I have now stated to the House the outline of those views which, after much deliberation, I honestly and sincerely entertain; and I cannot too strongly state my insuperable objections to the proposition of the hon. Member for Stroud. The right hon. Baronet concluded by stating that his Amendments, on going into Committee, would be to strike out the word "destitute," the word "poor," and to add to the word "fever" "and other epidemic diseases."

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN said, nothing could be more fair than the spirit in which this subject had been discussed by the right hon. Baronet. He hoped to discuss it with the same feeling; but in the remarks which he should feel it his duty to address to the House, if anything should fall from him contrary to that, he trusted they would not consider that it was put forward with any intention of offending the right hon. Baronet. They were all agreed that it was desirable to take measures to prevent the epidemic which would result from the failure of the potato crop, in order to meet future contingencies; but, in his opinion, the Bill which the Government had introduced with the intention of accomplishing this object was inadequate to the emergency. He found, by reference to the Irish Poor Law Act, that the guardians of every Poor Law Union are empowered to provide relief for persons affected with contagious or other diseases in the workhouses under their control during their illness and convalescence; to afford them such food as they might deem necessary, with the consent of the Poor Law Commissioners; and that the expense should be paid out of the rates paid by the inhabitants of each Union. Under this law there were eighty-eight fever hospitals connected with Unions, in all of which this rule had been carried out, whenever necessity arose. He thought, therefore, that the right hon. Baronet should have brought forward some case in which the guardians of one or more of these Unions had neglected or refused to carry out this provision: he had not, however, done so; but the Bill he had introduced showed that he considered that the Poor Law guardians had neglected their duty. The Bill would introduce the principle of imperative taxation, which was much complained of in Ireland, and apparently without achieving any great object. It also gave power to the Executive to appoint fresh medical officers, certainly at the expense of the State, who were to supersede the officers now employed in the different Unions. It appeared to him, however, that the people of Ireland did not want fever hospitals, but food at the present moment. The Government asked, had they not brought in the Corn Law Bill? That, he apprehended, was a Bill for England, and not for Ireland. If that

measure had the effect, as predicted by its friends, and dreaded by its opponents, of reducing the export trade from Ireland from 15,000,000*l.* to 12,000,000*l.*, the first effect of it, at all events, would be to reduce by 3,000,000*l.* the power of giving employment in Ireland. In 107 Unions, distributed over twenty-five counties, the Reports proved there was fever, diarrhœa, and all manner of complaints arising from scanty and diseased food. They had now come to a crisis in Ireland; and he was afraid that, in a short time, the supply of provisions would be altogether exhausted. But certainly, as regarded a large portion of the population, the remedy for distress should not be longer delayed. It was a prevalent feeling in Ireland, that the ports ought to have been opened in November last. It was the duty of Government, when such a crisis was depending, to have assembled Parliament; and then such measures would have been adopted as would have rendered unnecessary any appeal to the public purse. As regarded railway expenses, it was manifest that it would be impossible that any funds from that source would come into circulation in connexion with any Railway Bills to be considered this Session. Had the Government taken these projects into consideration in November last, their benefit might have been felt at the period when it would most be wanted. The right hon. Gentleman had said, "Look at the liberality of Parliament; they had granted 400,000*l.* to afford employment to the people of Ireland; Bills for public works had been forwarded in order that Ireland might feel the benefit of the employment they would occasion. There was the Drainage Bill; the Bill for County Works, for which 100,000*l.* was to be advanced; the Public Works Bill, for which 50,000*l.* was to be advanced; and the Fisheries Piers Bill, for which 500,000*l.* was to be advanced. They would certainly be better than grants; and had he been speaking to an Irish Parliament, he would have recommended similar measures to them; for he considered that the principle of indiscriminate charity was one of the most demoralizing and debasing kind. If they would do what, in his opinion, they ought to do, they would not find it necessary to make these demands on the public Exchequer. About four or five millions per annum were abstracted from Ireland by absentees living in England or on the Continent; and if these people resided in their own country, it was his belief that there would not only be no prospect of starvation, but that the people would get better food. Let the Government levy a tax on the absentees, and they might keep their grants in their pockets. A tax of 10 per cent on 4,000,000*l.* would give 400,000*l.*, which could be applied to the relief and benefit of Ireland. It was not customary for him to suggest measures of improvement to Her Majesty's Ministers, yet he had no hesitation in saying that the principle of loans, if carried out, would be productive of great advantage. An hon. Member had spoken of the employment afforded by railway projects; but he could say that, from the stagnation of the money market, and other causes, there was a general indisposition at the present moment to pay up the calls upon shares; and even those which were in a forward state were now almost suspended for want of funds. Why could not the Government advance money, in order to carry them on? A very erroneous impression existed on people's minds in regard to loans made to Ireland. On almost every occasion of the kind the British Exchequer had profited by the transaction, because they borrowed the money in England at 3 per cent, and lent it to Ireland at five per cent, taking care, at the same time, to have some perfectly good security; as in the proposed measure for drainage, the Legislature had taken care to make money advanced for the purpose of draining the first charge upon the land benefited by it. The hon. Member for Stroud advocated local taxation. To that principle he had always been friendly; but he would rather prefer, for the present purpose, that a special rate should be made, from which all small holders should be exempted, but to which all annuitants, and every one who benefited by land, should be rendered liable. There was another class of measures which Her Majesty's Government ought to have brought forward. The Report of their own Commissioners had been lying on the Table of the House upwards of a year. That Report ought to have occupied their attention during the vacation; and they might have been prepared with measures that might have proved beneficial to Ireland. They had brought in a Coercion Bill, which would occupy several months in discussion; it was very possible that that Bill might not be passed before Christmas. They had had a specimen of the fixedness of purpose of the Irish Members in the discussion of the Arms Bill of 1843.

The discussion on that Bill must occupy much valuable time: would it not be better, then, he would ask, to devote the months which must be consumed upon it to the consideration of measures which would be beneficial and useful to Ireland? Let them appoint a Committee of Irish Members from every section of the House—refer the Report to which he had alluded to them—and he had no doubt they would unanimously recommend many measures which would be for the basis of useful legislation. The Coercion Bill would only further exasperate the people, and increase crime. Let them follow the advice he had given them, and the disposition to vilify their proceedings which was attributed to him would at once pass away, and he would say that their legislation was both wise and useful.

SIR J. GRAHAM observed that the Drainage Bill was not to be applied to Ireland alone, but was intended for the three kingdoms.

MR. WAKLEY said, he had hoped that the Government were not unfriendly to the introduction of a good Poor Law into Ireland; but it was now clear, from the statement of the right hon. Baronet, that the people of Ireland had no hope that such a law would be introduced, or if introduced, would be supported by the Government. He regarded the statement of the right hon. Baronet as a very calamitous announcement; and he thought that the poor of Ireland would have great reason to complain of it. The right hon. Baronet thought that it was not a permanent evil they were to provide for—a temporary arrangement was sufficient; but was not the present condition of Ireland, proved by their own inquiries and legislation, a reason for altering their permanent condition? [SIR J. GRAHAM: Not for altering the Poor Law.] He therefore felt grateful to the hon. Member for Stroud for introducing the subject in a large and comprehensive sense, in a way that the subject might be understood by the English public. He thought it positively disgraceful that England, Scotland, and Ireland should have different laws for the government of their poor. The right hon. Baronet had endeavoured to show why Ireland was not entitled to the same wide and general Poor Law as the people of England. In that respect he had failed. Was there not the same state of things in Ireland at present as in England before the Statute of Elizabeth? Did not vagrancy exist now in Ireland as it did then in England? Vagrancy was not punished in Ireland as it was in England; but it did not give a man in Ireland a title to relief. Suppose he were in England, he would be entitled to relief. Yes, if an Irish vagrant came to England, and by the law of England actually violated the law, he nevertheless would be entitled to relief; but in Ireland, even a destitute man, starving almost to death, was not entitled to relief. The right hon. Baronet said, he was entitled to beg. What a splendid boon to the Irish to be entitled to beg! Why not make vagrancy an offence in Ireland, as in England, and give to the poor of Ireland the same claim as they would have in England? Suppose an Irish labourer in England, destitute and having committed no offence, applied for relief; he obtained that relief; he was entitled by law to relief in England. After he had obtained this relief more than once, an order was issued for his removal to Ireland; he was sent to Ireland, and as soon as he was landed on the shores of his own country he was entitled to no relief. He was sent from a foreign country, where he was entitled to relief, and when he came to his native country he was doomed to starvation unless he could obtain charity. The same as to Scotchmen. If a Scotchman became a pauper in England, he was entitled by law to relief, and he received it. After a certain period he was sent, at the cost of 40*s.* or 50*s.*, to his own country, and his own Scotch law doomed him to starvation. And he should like to know whether, under this state of things, the English labourer was treated as he ought to be? He considered that the present state of the law was a robbery of the English landlord, and a robbery of the just rights of the English labourer. Many thousands of the Irish labourers came to England in the time of harvest, and at the end of it returned to their own country with what they had earned in their pockets. What was the condition of the English labourer? This was the season of the year at which the English labourer hoped that increased wages would enable him to set aside a sufficient sum to provide for the wants of that period of the year when employment would become scarce, and food more costly; yet the misfortune of his position was this, that at that critical moment the labour-market in England became glutted with an influx of labourers from a foreign country. [Hon. MEMBERS: Not foreign!] Certainly they were foreign-

ers in the eyes of the English labourer. He had not said that the Irish were foreigners; this, however, he would say, that those who wished to treat the Irish differently from the manner in which they treated the English, intended to make them foreigners; but nothing could be further from his mind than such a sentiment. He wished to see the working classes of both islands placed upon the same footing, and then competition amongst them could be injurious to neither. In the present state of things, nothing could be more unjust than to overwhelm the labour-market in this country with swarms of half-starved, half-naked Irishmen. Nothing could be more natural than that the English should regard the Irish labourer as a foreigner, for he beat down the value of the Englishman's labour. Now, the thing to be desired was, that there should be a Poor Law in Ireland that would make a provision for the destitute labourer. In England the law enforced such a provision; and let it be remembered that the Motion of the hon. Member for Stroud went no further than to effect that object. The right hon. Gentleman, in the speech the House had heard, made some observations the effects of which were to divert attention from the subject then more immediately under their consideration; but with any notice of those uncalled-for remarks he should not then trouble the House. He would suppose the law in Ireland to be similar to the law in England; and when that supposition had previously been adverted to, the right hon. Baronet said that it led to forced purchases, and that was the reason why the prices of food had reached their present level. [Sir J. GRAHAM: I did not say so.] Well, supposing that it was not so, or at least that the right hon. Gentleman had not said so, still he would ask, was not England open to the same or similar effects? Did not the guardians of the poor in this country make purchases upon the spot? Surely meat, flour, and other provisions for the workhouses were purchased in the immediate neighbourhood of such workhouses—in short, was not everything given in the workhouses obtained in the immediate vicinity of them? Before he sat down, he intended to contrast the extent to which outdoor relief was carried in this country, as compared with the relief afforded in the workhouses during the period which had elapsed between the enactment of the Irish Poor Law and the present time. But before he proceeded to do this, he wished once more to remind the House that the hon. Member for Stroud did nothing more than urge the House to do that which the operation of the Poor Laws effected every day in England. It seemed to him that the House ought very carefully to look at what was going on outside the workhouse, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would calmly and dispassionately consider the literal statement of facts which he intended to bring under the notice of the House; and in doing this he intended to quote from returns that the right hon. Gentleman himself used in debates which occurred in the course of last year. He would say to the right hon. Gentleman, that nothing could be more fair than to make the people of England aware of the facts which those returns disclosed; nothing was better calculated to enlighten the public mind upon this subject than to place those statements in juxtaposition. They should all be seen at one view in order to their being fully understood. He should limit his statement thus—he should begin with the year 1837, and end with 1844. The hon. Member then read the following table:—

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Years.	Relieved in Workhouses.	Relieved out of Workhouses.
1837	30,351	258,367
1838	78,264	568,113
1839	98,755	674,788
1840	114,626	747,052
1841	136,442	814,425
1842	149,461	855,283
1843	183,974	1,010,136
1844	179,663	997,224

Now, the House must remember that in Ireland no one received any relief out of the workhouse. Some hon. Members had cheered when he reached that part of the statement which showed that there had been a decrease in the numbers of those who received relief outside the workhouse, as if that proved the system to be bad; but the aggregate numbers did not show the working of the law so much as the percentage did. In 1839, 1840, and 1841, it was 87; 86 in 1842, 85 in 1843, and 85 in 1844. That showed the state of the law, its operation, and its practice. Did the right hon. Gentleman disapprove of that practice? If it be bad, why not alter it? But it had worked well as far as outdoor relief was concerned. He would put the proposition again. If the system were

bad, and objectionable, and demoralizing, why not alter it? But if good, it ought to be extended. Nothing was more common than to declaim in that House and other places against the evils of absenteeism; but he desired to know if any one could devise a better absentee tax than that which a good sound system of poor rates afforded. The English people had a right to be protected from the competition which the influx of Irish labourers occasioned. The duty of providing for their own poor belonged to the Irish proprietors. Possibly some Irish Members thought that they did maintain their own poor. How did they maintain their poor—was it on potatoes? The Returns which were upon the Table of the House showed that millions of the Irish had no other food than potatoes. Now, he wanted to know if the great landed gentry of Ireland were contented with that state of things? Were the protectionists satisfied with it? Dr. Corrigan, in a very just and forcible manner, described the condition of the pauper Irish. That Gentleman truly described them as living upon the very lowest description of food, and at the same time he very truly stated that starvation was uniformly followed by pestilence; and it was not until pestilence supervened that the Irish gentry seemed to grow discontented. At the present moment Ireland was threatened with starvation, and therefore was threatened with pestilence. Every means should of course be adopted to remedy the evil; but mere talk would do no good. Hon. Members might say that at the present moment it was not expedient to alter the law. Did any one suppose that they would be willing to change it when the pressure upon them was lessened? The noble Lord the Member for London had given notice that he intended, after Easter, to bring the state of Ireland under the consideration of the House; he hoped that the public would learn from the noble Lord distinctly what his views were as to an Irish Poor Law; for the present was a most cruel state of things, because it was well known that if in Ireland a poor man fell into a state of destitution, there was no remedy open to him. There, if a poor man fell ill of fever, or any other ailment, and the fever hospitals were full, and the workhouses full, what could he do? There was no relief for him. That every one knew to be the state of the law, and every one must know that the representation which he gave of the matter was strictly true; yet in that state of things the right hon. Gentleman came down to the House and proposed a Fever Bill, the object of which was to limit the probable operation of the pestilence. But was the evil one of limited operation? Was it not an evil which had spread itself over the whole face of the country; and were there not at the present moment millions threatened with starvation? All this time, however, it was said that the workhouses were not full. Probably the poor people thought that they might as well starve out of the workhouses as in them. It was idle to say that the people were not half starved in the workhouses. No doubt the Irish proprietors were a fine, generous, hilarious set of gentlemen; but yet after all they did not take care of their poor; and there was the puzzle. It quite baffled him; there was something in the Irish character which he could not understand. The Irish proprietors thought that they maintained their own poor; but what sort of maintenance was it? The best way of answering that question was to see from the returns before the House what was the dietary. In value, the dietary amounted to a sum less than 2*s.* per week; for that was the *maximum* cost of diet and of clothing, taken altogether. In many of the Unions, the charges for diet, necessaries, and clothing were 1*s.* 4*d.*, 1*s.* 5*d.*, 1*s.* 8*d.*, and 1*s.* 9*d.* a week. They clothed the poor for 1*d.* a week. He confessed that he knew not how poor people could be clothed at so small an expense, unless, indeed, they were covered with the skins of potatoes. With such clothing and diet it was no wonder that the people kept out of the workhouse. When human beings could be induced to enter such places, what must have been their previous condition? Surely no one would voluntarily go into a place where only 1*s.* 9*d.* was to be expended in his maintenance. If an Irishman in this country happened to be guilty of disorderly conduct, he was taken to a station-house, and there he got bread, butter, coffee, &c., to the value of 6*d.*, and his lodging to boot. The maintenance of criminals in this country cost from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* and 4*s.* a week; and pauper lunatics cost in England as much as 9*s.* 6*d.*, whereas the same class of persons in Ireland were restricted to 1*s.* 9*d.*, and, in some cases, the allowance was as low as 1*s.* 4½*d.* per week. Looking, then, at these facts, he could not help saying that he should like to be informed if the Irish landlords were unfriendly to the introduction of a poor

law of a more liberal character; and if they were not now favourable to such a change, he desired to know when it was at all likely that they could be induced to give it their sanction. The state of this question was very ably handled in a pamphlet from which he intended to make some extracts. Of this pamphlet Dr. Corrigan was the author. Now, he wished hon. Members clearly to understand who Dr. Corrigan was. That gentleman was a physician of great knowledge and experience, a man who had been engaged in the practice of his profession for more than five and twenty years; and let the House recollect this, that the pamphlet in question was not written for the purpose of answering the present Bill, but, on the contrary, was published early in the last autumn. Dr. Corrigan had gone fully into the whole subject. As he had already stated, that gentleman was a physician, and a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. He was also Physician to the Hardwicke Fever, Whitworth, and Richmond Hospitals, Lecturer on the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Dublin School of Medicine, formerly Physician to Cork Street Fever Hospital, to the Charitable Infirmary, Jervis Street, and to the Sick Poor Institution, Dublin. Moreover, Dr. Corrigan was a man of great reputation in his profession, yet at the same time a man who had never in any way been concerned in political affairs; a pamphlet written by him, therefore, could never have been got up to serve party purposes. For this reason, then, a statement coming from such a man must be viewed as a work of authority, and one full of weight. He did not like to trouble the House with long extracts, or to waste their time with reading anything which did not well deserve their attention; but on a subject of that importance he hoped they would not consider their time misspent in listening to a few extracts from the pamphlet which he held in his hand. Dr. Corrigan availed himself of information which extended over a period of 100 years, although his own personal observations did not go further back than 1817. Now, Dr. Corrigan asserted, and apparently on very good authority, that nothing was more probable than that the famine and pestilence of 1846 would be as severe as those of 1817 and 1826. These were his words :—

" In the commencement of the year 1817 those who foresaw the coming pestilence, and would have made exertions to obviate it, were considered as alarmists. Thus, in Tullamore, in that year, when it was proposed to adopt measures to check the coming evil, the proposers were coldly and jealously avoided, their plains were ridiculed, and their efforts were unaided; but how sudden was the transition! The death of some persons of note"—

(Yes, as soon as it reached the mansions of the wealthy, precautions were taken which previously no one thought of:)

—" excited a sense of danger; alarm commenced, which ran into general dismay; military were posted at every avenue; the town was placed in a state of blockade; all intercourse in business, all trade was arrested, and all communication between the town and adjacent country was at an end. The poor were deprived of employment, and were driven from the doors where before they had always received relief, lest they should introduce disease with them. Thus, destitution and fever continued in a vicious circle, each impelling the other, while want of presence of mind aggravated a thousandfold the terrible infliction."

The right hon. Gentleman opposite ought to be made acquainted with the substance of that pamphlet. [Sir J. GRAHAM: I have read it.] Then it was much to be regretted that the perusal of that publication had produced so very little effect upon the mind of the right hon. Gentleman; there had been no fruits from his study of it. He did not appear to have adopted a single suggestion proceeding from the pen of Dr. Corrigan. He should now proceed to lay before the House the observations made by Dr. Corrigan on the subject of fever hospitals. When fever prevailed, the poor were driven from the habitations of the wealthy; they were, therefore, deprived of employment, they returned amongst their neighbours and friends, famine brought disease, disease brought want of employment; and so the miseries of the people proceeded in a circle, for the wealthy were afraid to receive labourers from the infected districts. So it was in 1817 and 1826, and so it would be in 1846. The pamphlet of Dr. Corrigan then went on to say—

" I know not of any visitation so much to be dreaded as epidemic fever; it is worse than plague, for it lasts through all seasons. Cholera may seem more frightful, but it is in reality less destructive—it terminates rapidly in death, or in as rapid recovery; its visitation too is short, and it leaves those who recover unimpaired in health and strength. Civil war, were it not for its crimes, would be, as far as regards the welfare of a country, a visitation less to be dreaded than epidemic fever. Epidemic fever, as it has appeared in Ireland, persists through all seasons, and, when it has seized on an individual, generally extends to every member of the family, leaving no one of them capable of struggling against the common destitution. In Dublin alone, notwithstanding all the means of prevention that wealth and charity

supplied, 42,000 patients passed through the fever hospitals, or one-sixth of the whole population of the city, in the epidemic of 1817 and 1818; and of 6,000,000, the estimated population of Ireland at that time, at least 1,5000,000 of the labouring classes suffered from fever. Of these about 60,000 died."

That was his statement of facts, and could anything be more frightful? They ought to know every fact which was necessary to prevent these epidemics not only now, but for the future; and if they left the Irish to subsist only on the potato, they would always be subject to the same calamities that they now were. The writer went on to observe—

"The epidemics which appeared at different times, during a space of 100 years, have presented the same characters. It is reasonable to infer that they owe their origin to some common cause; my attention was, therefore, turned to ascertain what that common cause was. For this no mode of inquiry seemed better adapted than the inductive, to group together all the epidemics of which we have accurate accounts, noting the circumstances that accompanied or preceded each, and ascertaining if among them there were some one condition invariably present, which, according to the laws of this mode of inquiry, would then be that common cause."

In making an inquiry into the causes, he found them all to vary except one. There was every variety of cause in operation on each return of the epidemic; but there was one common cause in each succeeding epidemic. What was that cause? It was want of food; want of a sufficient supply of food, or of a food of good quality. Finding, then, this cause invariable, Dr. Corrigan ascribed the epidemic fevers to want, and to want alone. He said—

"I have thus thrown together, with a concise notice of the most remarkable preceding or accompanying circumstances, the principal epidemics of the last hundred years. It is a maxim in philosophizing to assign like causes to like effects; and if upon a general view of all the instances adduced we find some one condition invariably present, to that condition we give the name of cause. We give the name of cause to the object which we believe to be the invariable antecedent of a particular change. Epidemic fevers are the like effects; we must, if possible, assign them like causes. Upon a general review of all the instances, with the accompanying circumstances, we find one condition invariably present—famine, which we, therefore, mark down as their common cause."

And, observing on the measures which were passed in the year 1826 of a similar character to that which the right hon. Baronet now proposed, Dr. Corrigan, with his mind fortified by facts and experience, wrote this opinion of what was then done:—

"When the epidemic of 1826 appeared, an Act of Parliament was put in force, suggested by the Board of Health, which obliged each parish to appoint persons denominated officers of health. Their duties were to see that all nuisances, such as collections of manure, &c., were removed, and that the habitations of the poor were whitewashed. Much money was expended in this way, in cleaning out dépôts of filth for those who were too indolent to do it for themselves, and in whitewashing rooms for poor creatures who then had not the price of fuel to dry their wet walls."

And upon these proceedings the writer thus commented:—

"I would be far from undervaluing the advantages of cleanliness, but it is plain that all those matters over which the officers of health were given control, had equally existed for an indefinite period of time, and, and without being accompanied by any epidemic, and that expending much time and money in their removal, and directing the principal attention to them, was objectionable for two reasons. First, it was nearly an useless expenditure; and secondly, presenting an appearance of active exertion, it drew away attention from the real cause of the evil. The Act of Parliament took away all discretionary power from the parishes; they might spend as much money as they pleased in whitewashing rooms and staircases, but they could not lay out one penny to save a fellow creature from starvation."

This was written last autumn, before there was any suggestion made by the Government, and made before any measure had been proposed, but made upon a Bill precisely similar to the present. Writing of the effects of the Bill of 1826, this gentleman told them that it was all very well to whitewash the rooms and passages; but that it would be better to prevent disease, and the spread of disease, by giving the poor people food. [Mr. S. HERBERT: We are doing that.] He did not see any symptoms of that at present. Dr. Corrigan said—

"The people of Ireland are peculiarly liable to become the victims of such pestilence. The effect of competition among a population with little employment has been to reduce their wages to the lowest sum on which life can be supported. Potatoes have hence become their staple food. If this crop be unproductive, the earnings of the labouring class are then quite insufficient to purchase the necessary quantity of any other food. Corn is altogether out of reach of their means; and thus, with an abundance of it around them, so great as to admit of exportation, they starve in the midst of plenty, as literally as if dungeon bars separated them from a granary. When distress has been at its height, and our poor have been dying of starvation in our streets, our corn has been going to a foreign market It is to our own poor a forbidden fruit. The potato has, I believe, been a curse to our country. It has reduced the wages of the labourers to the very smallest pittance; and when a bad crop occurs, there is no descent for them in the scale of food: the next step is starvation."

What were they now doing in the House to prevent the spread of this disease? They were merely directing that in certain

Unions in which disease should exist places which were called "fever hospitals" should be established by the guardians, and that there should be administered to those who were suffering from disease nourishment, medicine, and medical attendance. But what were they doing to prevent the origin of the disease? Nothing. With regard to the prevention of the disease not a single step had been taken. What did the writer to whom he had referred say upon this point?—

"Little need be said of the means best adapted to guard us against it. It remains for others than the physician to provide the preventive; it is to be found not in medicine, but in employment; not in the lancet, but in food; not in raising lazarettos for the reception of the sick, but in establishing manufactories for the employment of the healthy. This is the true mode of banishing fever from this country."

Unless they threw this duty in the form of a law on the proprietors of the soil, would it ever be done? His conviction was, that it would not. If it were the legal duty of the proprietors of England to supply the people with work or with food, why was there not a like duty imposed on the proprietors of land in Ireland? He maintained that the state of the English poor was infinitely better than the state of the poor in Ireland. ["No, no!"] Then, why did the Irish people come here? ["To obtain work."] To be sure they did; they came here to obtain that work which they could not get in their own country; and why was it not provided for them there? If the burden of maintaining the poor in Ireland were thrown upon the proprietors, as was the case with the poor in England, they would not want work for the people; because especial care would be taken, if the proprietors had to maintain the Irish poor, that they were provided with work. The poor were now left to subsist on the charitable feeling of the nation. He held that the people of a country ought to have a right by law to a maintenance; those who were willing to work ought to be provided with the means; they ought to receive the wages of their labour, and to be independent of charity for their maintenance. Dr. Corrigan said on this—

"Some time might, however, elapse before measures, how well soever devised, could be brought into effective operation, to enable our population to possess within themselves the means of obtaining sufficient supplies of food; and it therefore remains to be determined, what would be the most beneficial mode of distributing nourishment, were we again to be visited by an epidemics such as that of 1817 or 1826. A plan was adopted in St. Catherine's parish, Dublin, for the distribution of food during the epidemic of 1826, which will be found, I believe, applicable on all similar occasions in towns. I can speak from personal knowledge of its efficiency. Tickets were issued to persons or families ascertained to be fit objects for relief. No ticket was given unless at the residence of the applicant, whose real circumstances thus came directly under the eye of the inspector. Those tickets remained in force for fourteen days, and were renewed or not at the end of that time, according to the discretion of the inspector. There were two classes of ticket, pay tickets and gratis tickets. The holder of a gratis ticket received each day during its term, a roll of bread with one quart of hot soup, The holder of a pay ticket received the same, but was obliged to pay for it 1*d.*, about one third of its original cost. It frequently happened that those who during one fortnight were in the greatest distress were often able during the next fortnight to become holders of pay tickets, and thus to contribute to the maintenance of the fund by which they had themselves been relieved. The demand of the small sum of one third of the first cost for the food, while it enabled the distressed labourer to support himself cheaply, still preserved his independence, and preserved him from the disgrace of being considered as a mendicant. Moreover, the sum thus obtained in pence from the poor, and returned to them in the most advantageous form for themselves, namely, in wholesome hot food, amounted to much more than might at first be supposed. In St. Catherine's parish the sum thus received in pence from the poor in little more than six months was 277*l.*"

The learned doctor did not in his pamphlet mention any proposal for giving extended powers to the Poor Law guardians; but he summed up the conviction to which he had come from the facts he had investigated in these words:—

"I have in the above observations endeavoured to keep three positions prominently before my readers:—1st. That famine (including deficient or unwholesome food) is the paramount cause of the epidemic fevers of Ireland. 2dly. That epidemic fever, originate as it may, soon acquires a contagious power, a power of generating and of propagating itself, and thus involving all, rich and poor, in the country, in one common danger. And 3dly, as a corollary from these two, that employment and wholesome food will be the best prevention, aided, should the necessity arise, by hospitals to extinguish contagion."

The right hon. Gentleman proposed only by this Bill the erection of hospitals; and it would be unnecessary for him to comment upon the clauses in that Bill, because it was admitted by the right hon. Gentleman that it was a measure of a limited extent, from which he did not expect much good; and he (Mr. Wakley) certainly expected none, or next to none, from it. What he wanted to see were measures adopted adequate to prevent the spread of disease, or, what was far more important, the origination of disease. Out of the 110 reports they had received, nearly the

whole of the returns showed that the origin of the disease was owing to a want of food, and there were most alarming accounts of the prospects before them. In many instances it was stated that the produce would only last for a few weeks. So long as the people should be simply destitute there was no remedy by the law; it was only when sickness should supervene that the law mercifully gave a provision; and then after these poor men were cured, with their frames and strength exhausted by the disease, they were to be sent out again, and were again to be exposed to poisonous and pestiferous influences. He said, the picture was one of such an appalling nature, and the prospects were so frightful, that every effort ought to be made by the Government and by the House to prevent the occurrence of so dreadful an epidemic amongst the Irish population. In the present measure he found nothing of that kind: it was wholly inadequate to the occasion. The Government said that they were responsible for the supply of food; but they ought to throw the responsibility on the law. He knew it had been often calumniously stated that what led to the destitution and poverty of the Irish people, and to their living in mud-holes, was their idleness. He believed that a falser statement had never been made, and that a grosser calumny had never been circulated in an intelligent community. What did they witness in London? The severest labour was performed by the bricklayers' labourers. He believed that, beyond all question, the severest labour in England, but in London most undoubtedly, the severest work that a labouring man could perform, was performed by the bricklayers' labourers. By whom then was that labour performed? By the Irish, almost to a man. There were some 20,000 bricklayers' labourers in London and its suburbs, and not more than 100 of these were English. What were the wages of these labourers? Eighteen shillings a week. Now, within twenty miles of London the English labourers in agriculture—in Buckinghamshire, for instance—were not receiving more than 8*s*. or 9*s*. a week. Yet so terribly severe was the labour of the bricklayers' labourer, that, with all the temptation of the increased wages, the English labourer was incapable of performing the work, and shrank from the toil, which was gladly and cheerfully performed by the Irish labourer, though the English labourer was now receiving but half the wages he could earn by the severer trial. The Irish, then, would work if they had the opportunity. What he wished was, that they should have that opportunity; and of that the hon. Member for Stroud contemplated the provision by his present Resolution. If, by introducing clauses into the Bill, the right hon. Baronet should carry out the principle of that Resolution, he would soon compel the boards of guardians to provide work for the poor in a state of destitution. This would be the best tax on the absentee proprietors of Ireland; if it fell unfairly, let all be bound to assist. If it oppressed unjustly the property in Ireland, the people of this country would have no right not to contribute; but the poor man in Ireland ought to be protected from suffering those horrible calamities to which he was exposed from the want of those staple articles of food which ought to fall to his share. It was acknowledged that there were millions in Ireland into whose cabins a loaf of bread never entered. The state in which they existed was a disgrace to civilization. All other classes had been advancing; new luxuries were daily in store for them; but whilst the wealthy were increasing their means of happiness, the Irish labourers were in as bad a condition now as they were a hundred years ago. It was a disgrace to the Government—he did not allude particularly to the present Government, but to all the Governments which had existed in this country—that Parliamentary measures had not been proposed to protect the labourers. Every advantage had been given to the English labourer by the Act of 43d Elizabeth, the principle of which had been carried out for the last 250 years; and he would only ask what would have been the present condition of the Irish labourers if that principle had been in operation in that country? The poor would have been as well off there as they were here; and, until they had such a law for Ireland, the social, physical, and moral condition of the Irish would not be improved.

MR. SHAW would trespass very shortly on the House, as he desired to throw no impediment in the way of the Bill then under their consideration going into Committee. He could not however avoid making a few observations upon the speech of the hon. Member for Finsbury who had just sat down. The hon. Gentleman had accused that side of the House of a reluctance to adopt a good Poor Law for Ireland. Now, they did not object to a

good Poor Law, but they did object to the hon. Gentleman's definition of what a good Poor Law was. He would at that time introduce into Ireland the old English Poor Law, with all its grievous abuses of outdoor relief and labour-rates. He entirely concurred with the right hon. Baronet in repudiating that plan. In England, for nearly three centuries, there had been a Poor Law; and the evils of the outdoor system had been so great, that the whole policy of the recently amended law was gradually to get rid of them. In Ireland, a Poor Law at all had only been introduced within the last few years; and the great object was to keep off the old abuses of the English law, by restricting the relief to be afforded to indoor relief. The system had been attempted in Ireland under many difficulties and much opposition. He had supported it, and it was even then working better than he had almost ventured to anticipate. The tax on the land of the country was already about 260,000*l.* a year, and if that were increased in the ratio that the statistics of the hon. Gentleman proved — the proportion of outdoor relief to bear to indoor relief in England —it would absorb the whole property of the country; indeed, according to the hon. Gentleman's definition of a poor condition of living, there were many large districts in Ireland where the whole labouring population would become fair claimants for the outdoor relief he contended for. The hon. Gentleman, as well as the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope), who had moved the Amendment, complained that there was in Ireland no legal right to relief. True, but the workhouses were not full; and though there was no strict legal right to relief, practically it was never denied to any destitute person who sought it at the poor house. Then the hon. Member complained of the treatment of the paupers in the workhouses in Ireland; but if he would take the trouble to visit them, he would find the poor people in them clean and comfortable, and well fed. There was only one point on which he differed from the speech of the right hon. Baronet. It was with reference to the purchase of oats in Ireland. He quite agreed with the right hon. Baronet, that it would have been absurd to prohibit the exportation of oats; but he thought, without materially raising the price, as much money as was expended on American maize might have been more wisely and economically spent in purchasing in Ireland a food that the people there were used to. And without any interference, such as had been recommended by the hon. Member for Finsbury, with the Poor Law guardians by the Government, he was aware that some of the boards of guardians had very prudently purchased oatmeal and other food for the inmates of the workhouses, instead of potatoes. He would not then dwell upon the exaggeration of the extent of the scarcity and danger of famine in Ireland, of which he had before spoken in that House; but he had nothing to retract on the subject. It was not, however, when a remedial measure for the distress and sufferings of the Irish people was before the House, that he wished to introduce that topic — for he fully admitted that there was ample ground in Ireland for all the temporary measures of alleviation that the Government were proposing. He would willingly and cordially support them, in giving labour to the unemployed—food to those threatened with famine, and in providing for the care and comfort of the sick. But when the discussion should be with reference to the Corn Laws, then he would never shrink from exposing what he considered the frivolous and flimsy pretence of making the usual periodical distress of the Irish poor —aggravated in the present season, as it was, by the disease of the potato—a ground for altering the whole commercial system, and removing the just protection to native industry, throughout the Empire. Upon that occasion, however, he must say a word upon each of the documents relative to the potato disease and apprehended famine, which had lately been printed by the House, and had been observed upon by hon. Gentlemen who had preceded him. As to the first — the potato return, it showed a price somewhat higher than the average of late years, but still nothing approaching to a famine price, namely, about, on an average, 4*d.* per stone, or 2*s.* 8*d.* per cwt. And, as to the paper on disease, it proved no very extensive case of fever throughout the country generally. The first remark that it struck one to make upon it was, that there were answers from no more than 108 dispensary doctors, whereas in Ireland there were between 600 and 700 : and it was to be supposed that the answers were to a general circular sent them all. [Sir JAMES GRAHAM : They only gave the answers where fever had actually broken out]. No, no; he begged pardon of the right hon. Baronet, for a great number of the answers only stated

the apprehension of fever. Such a document, he believed, could very truly be made out in any year for the last ten at that season; and, that such was the opinion of Dr. Corrigan, would appear from the pamphlet the hon. Member had so largely quoted. He felt that there was some danger lest the care of the sick poor, once being thrown, under the present Bill, upon the Poor Law Unions, there might be a difficulty in removing it, and that it might become a permanent charge upon the poor rates. Still he would rather encounter that danger than oppose any temporary measure, introduced on the responsibility of the Government to meet the present exigency, and therefore he would not offer any impediment to the progress of the Bill.

MR. FRENCH, in deference to the feeling expressed on both sides of the House, should not, at present, enter on a discussion as to the demerits and defects of the Irish Poor Law; his opinions were unchanged as to its inapplicability to the wants of the country: inoperative for good —productive only of discontent and disturbance, injudiciously and offensively administered by the Commissioners—it would not be a matter of surprise that it was almost without a defender. There was one subject, however, unconnected with its administration, which he could not pass over. In reply to a question put by him to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, why the guardians of the Castlereagh Union were dismissed? an answer had been put into the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman, wholly and totally destitute of truth. The right hon. Gentleman stated, that the Poor Law Commissioners had dismissed the guardians of the Castlerea Union, because they refused to open the workhouse. He had lately seen several of the selected magistrates and electoral guardians of that Union, and learned from them that the House had been opened, a new rate imposed, and that the reason assigned was the very opposite of fact. Assurances of this kind were not only damaging to the Commission, but to the Government by whom they were retained in office. He fully concurred with his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick, that Government had no reason to pride themselves on the measures brought forward by them in the present Session of Parliament in relation to Ireland. The self-complacency of the right hon. Baronet was ludicrously absurd. Whatever might be the intentions of Her Majesty's Government to promote the interests of Ireland, they were singularly infelicitous in carrying them into effect. He neither anticipated the improvement of the country nor employment of the people as a consequence of the three measures so often boasted of. Their sole result would be to add to the arbitrary and objectionable power of the Executive, and of the public boards in Dublin. Their first measure, the Public Works Act, with its 50,000*l.* for moiety grants, clogged with the condition that the public works to which any portion of this money was granted, shall from thenceforward be placed in the hands of Commissioners resident probably 100 miles or upwards from the spot, to lay out any sums they please, under the head of repairs, repayable by the districts, through the means of compulsory presentments. Secondly, the Drainage Bill, carrying with it the necessity for those who avail themselves of its provisions, to place their estates in the hands of the Commissioners, to be cut and carved, and possibly ultimately sold, at their pleasure. Then came the sum of 200,000*l.* for the promotion of inland navigation, just at a time when it was proved that the cost of carriage by water could not in point of economy contend with that by the rail. This loan, in place of serving Ireland, was likely to prove of the greatest disservice, as works would be executed by public money which private parties would not be found to undertake. There would not be any return for this money so invested, and a check would be given to the influx of capital into Ireland. He regretted the position of the Government, that, since the death of his noble Friend, Lord Fitzgerald, there was no person amongst them who understood anything of the interests of Ireland, or the feelings of any class of her inhabitants. 100,000*l.* was to be advanced under the Grand Jury Presentments' Bill. Already the magistrates and cesspayers assembled under that Bill had found out that it was so framed as not to carry out the objects of its preamble; and at five sessions in his county, where they had met, they had unanimously declined to put it in force. In the baronies of Ballintubber, Boyle, May, Carnon, and indeed in every barony of the county of Roscommon, such had been the result. He held in his hand copies of the Resolutions agreed to at each of these meetings, fully explanatory of the deficiencies of this Act, and showing how

utterly impossible it was to secure any employment to the people, although that was stated in its preamble to be the object sought for. The necessity of accepting the lowest tender, and giving the execution of the work to the contractor making it, precluded the possibility of, under it, procuring employment for the distressed poor, in districts suffering from the failure of the potato crop. Now, as to the necessity of the Bill at present before them, on what was it founded? A return had lately been laid before the House on the state of disease in Ireland, which Government appeared to rely on as showing a necessity for the measure. Now, what did that Paper really show? There were between 700 and 800 medical institutions in Ireland—between 600 and 700 dispensaries—eighty-eighty fever hospitals, supported by grand jury presentments; and, according to the statement of the right hon. Baronet, eighty-one Unions out of the 130, had availed themselves of the power given under Vesey's clauses, and established fever hospitals in the workhouses. The number of medical institutions might therefore be fairly taken at about 800. A circular was of course written to all. Where is that circular? Where are the answers to it? But 108 of "the most serious" have been published—one-eighth of the whole. The remainder were cushioned—they would not support the "alarming exigency" of the Minister. Even of the 108 published, but four specify in figures an actual increase of disease, the remaining 104 are vague and indefinite, and merely record the apprehensions of the writers, and their desire to have fever hospitals built in their district. On their own Paper, their own admission showed that there was no necessity for this measure. There were already 165 fever hospitals in Ireland, and there was a power vested in the Poor Law guardians to increase that number if necessary. Why then should this objectionable and unconstitutional power be given to the Lord Lieutenant of taxing the people of Ireland at his pleasure? Why should the medical men, if they be required, be paid out of the Consolidated Fund? The landlords, landholders, and owners, were the parties on whom this charge should be placed, and if it were necessary it would by them be willingly borne; this provision was merely an attempt to bribe the medical profession and stamp the country with pauperism. There was, however, an omission from this Bill, which he could not leave unnoticed. There was not one word about inspection, notwithstanding that every Committee that had inquired into the state of medical relief in Ireland had strongly recommended it. The Poor Law Commissioners, the Poor Inquiry Commissioners, the Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians, and united voice of the medical profession, had advocated the necessity of inspection; yet this, the only thing that could by possibility give satisfaction, or carry out proper medical relief, was omitted. By it alone could a due administration of the funds be secured, and a proper medical assistance to the poor be provided for. Now with respect to the proposed Board of Health, he should like to know who the individuals were who were about to be appointed. They were, he understood, to be the heads of different departments already in the service of Government; but what knowledge of medical arrangements, or the treatment of epidemics could be expected from commissary-generals or inspectors-general of police? From his experience of the late Board of Health, he was not disposed to place much confidence in the proposed arrangements. Under the old system, an application was made for the sum of 200*l*., for cholera or fever, he forgot which, but the documents were in the Castle of Dublin. The money was sent down without any previous inquiry, and a compulsory presentment forwarded to the grand jury to levy its amount. The grand jury objected, on the ground that no fever existed in the locality at the time specified; but the certificate of the Under Secretary for Ireland was imperative, and the money had to be paid. On subsequent inquiry it was discovered that the application had been made to the Board of Health, that the money was sent down, and was appropriated to the building of a house of religious worship. This Bill appeared to him to be uncalled for and unnecessary, and he therefore protested against its passing.

Mr. B. OSBORNE expressed his regret that the Amendment had been moved, and, if his hon. Friend pressed it to a division, he must vote against it; for a proposition involving so wide a question as that of outdoor relief should have been brought forward as a substantive Motion. Now, the hon. Member for Finsbury had made an observation which had very much struck him. He knew the kindness of heart of that hon. Gentleman, and his wish to promote the welfare of the Irish people, but the hon. Gentleman stated that he did not

understand the Irish character. He (Mr. Osborne) thought the hon. Gentleman neither understood the Irish character nor the state of Ireland. The hon. Member spoke of the labourers coming over to this country; but did he not know that in many counties of England the harvest could not be got in but for the aid of the Irish labourers? Then he seemed to desire that the food of the people in the workhouses should be different from that of the labourers generally. Now he lamented that the potato should be the staple food of the Irish people; but the hon. Gentleman must know, that it was a subject of great difficulty to change the food of a people. He himself knew a case in which a landlord had given oaten cakes to his labourers, and what was the fact? They refused to take them. In his opinion the preliminary step for any measure of relief for the people of Ireland was employment. It would never do to engender a system of eleemosynary relief in that country. There was one kind of capital there which had been altogether neglected to the present day. It was the capital of labour; and it was perfectly disgraceful to the various Governments of this country that they had never taken that into consideration. He called such a course abdicating the functions of a Government. The hon. Member for Limerick had said, put a tax on the mortgagees; but the effect of such a measure would only be to raise the value of money in Ireland. Now, he adhered to the old axiom, that property had its duties as well as its rights, and he was prepared to act up to it in his own person. For his own part, he thought that the much-abused class, the Irish landlords, were as good, if not better, than the English. There might be some who were distressed, which was the real origin of bad landlords; and he should be most happy to see some measure brought in to break the law of entail in Ireland, which, in his opinion, caused much of that distress. He would recommend the First Lord of the Treasury to advance liberal loans to the railways in progress in Ireland, but for which many of them would not be made. One of the most important of these undertakings, the Limerick and Waterford Railway, was now at a standstill for want of such assistance.

Mr. M. MILNES: The hon. Member who had just sat down had hit the right nail on the head when he asserted that the great evil which afflicted Ireland consisted in the inability in which the majority of the landlords there found themselves of being able to do anything to better their own position. The observations which had fallen from him (Mr. M. Milnes) with reference to this subject on a former occasion had given rise to some ill feeling; but he was happy in being able to state that he had received communications from the other side of the channel assuring him that what he had said had been kindly taken, as he meant it. He entirely agreed also in what had been said of the better management of the Irish estates of the absentee landlords. At the same time he was of opinion that in such a crisis as impended over Ireland at the present moment, it was the imperative duty of those who had estates there to go over and personally superintend the efforts made to alleviate the miseries and distresses of the people who were under their care. That was what any English landlord would do if his tenantry or his neighbourhood were threatened with famine or fever; and why should not the Irish landlords act by their Irish tenantry as they would by their English tenantry, if the case called for it? He knew, however, that there must be some limit placed on the extent to which the relief administered by them went; for the demands upon the Irish landowners would otherwise be so great as not possibly to be complied with. There was one point to which he would direct particular attention—namely, the very heavy burden which the landlords endured in the shape of mortgages. They frequently paid 5 per cent, in most cases $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, for the money they borrowed; and he did firmly and conscientiously believe, that the more effectual means of affording relief to Ireland would be by the Government applying its own credit for the purpose of enabling the landowners to reduce their present mortgages, and to borrow money at from 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The question was a grave one, and would lead to grave objections; but if it were taken up by a more powerful advocate than he was himself, he had no doubt the remedy would be found effectual. Suppose the Government thereby enabled the landlords to borrow at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, how many hundreds of labourers would there not be at once employed in draining and otherwise improving lands in Ireland. He hoped the present discussion, and those preceding it, would convince Ireland that the feelings of the people of England, and of their representa-

tives, were strongly roused; and he trusted that those Members who had honoured them by coming over from Ireland, and taking part in their debates, would, when they went back to their countrymen, assure them that it was the universal belief amongst Englishmen, that whatever misery was endured by Ireland, was certain to recoil, by its effects, upon England.

COLONEL RAWDON would not take up the time of the House farther than to observe that the present was not a fit opportunity for entering upon so wide a topic as that supposed by the last hon. speaker. He wished particularly to direct attention to the fever and other returns from Ireland, and to observe that it would be advisable to have those returns periodically made, and to append to them the names of the landlords in whose localities diseases were most prevalent, so as to render those persons subject to public opinion. He had felt extreme gratification in hearing from the lips of the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary an avowal which he trusted would henceforward be acted upon by him, and one which was almost made in the precise terms used so often on his own side—namely, that the time was come when the Government must make up its mind to legislate upon Irish subjects with Irish feelings. He hoped and he believed that the expression of such a sentiment on the part of the Government, constituted a new era for Ireland.

SIR W. SOMERVILLE rose to make an observation on the Motion before the House; and he did so even at the risk of appearing hard and uncharitable under the afflicting circumstances in which Ireland was placed. He believed that if the practice of giving outdoor relief was resorted to as proposed, the practice would become permanent, and the workhouse test could never again be resorted to in Ireland. Would it, let him ask, be fair, without resorting to any test, or having recourse to any preliminary inquiry, at once by a by-law, such as was proposed, to overturn the whole social system upon which the Poor Law of Ireland was based? Had any emergency yet arrived which called for so sweeping a measure? The workhouses were not yet full, nor was there any demand for extra accommodation, which he would be prepared to provide in a temporary manner if needed. He knew it was said by the hon. Member near him, that the people of Ireland would not go into the workhouse; but the circumstances had not sufficiently tested that feeling, which, as it was founded on a false idea, would, he believed, vanish at the first opportunity of trying its strength.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON could not vote for the present Motion; but he thought that more power to give relief to the sick and impotent poor, as in Scotland, should be given to the guardians. On some future occasion, he should trouble the House with his opinions on the administration of relief in England. He knew a case in which the guardians of a Poor Law Union in Devonshire were—he could not say are—letting out the labour of ablebodied men. How the right hon. Baronet reconciled his views of political economy in Ireland with the laxity of his Poor Law administration here he could not pretend to say.

MR. FITZGERALD intended to vote for the Bill; but in doing so, he should observe that the very existence of the evils which led to the necessity for such a measure was proof of the existence of one of the heaviest grievances of which Ireland had to complain. One of the greatest evils of which Ireland complained was the want of a sufficient proportion of representation in the Cabinet or the Legislature. Now, the right hon. Baronet had admitted —and his evidence was most important— that there was not at present a single Irish Member in the British Cabinet. He thought that a serious grievance. But there was another part of the right hon. Baronet's speech for which he had pleasure in thanking him. He thanked him for the kind manner in which he had spoken of the Catholic clergy in Ireland. That kind language would be the more soothing to the people of Ireland, and would be productive of the better effect, that it had been used by the right hon. Baronet in that House on the same day on which a newspaper, which was looked upon as an organ of the Government — he meant the *Times* — ["No, no!"] — well, at all events, it was a journal that was looked upon as expressing the sentiments of the great majority of the people of England; and it was important that the right hon. Baronet should have used such soothing language on the same day on which an article of a most insulting nature appeared in the *Times* journal. In the *Times* of that morning there was an article on the state of Ireland, from which he would read to the House an extract. After alluding to "the enormity, not less than the impunity of

crime, and the encouragement given to it by great and organized conspiracies in different counties of Ireland," it went on thus—

"The spectacle of a country where outrage may be threatened with effect, and executed without retribution—where the forms of justice are of no avail, and its spirit without influence—where sympathy is on the side of the wrong-doers, and not of the sufferers — where testimony is perverted by fear, or destroyed by violence—where falsehood assumes the guise and utters the language of devotion—where perjury protects itself beneath the venerable garb of sanctity, or is sheltered by the sacred walls of the confessional."

Now, he asked, was not that an insult to the people of Ireland, and an attack upon the Catholic clergy of Ireland? Was it not language calculated to sink deeply into the minds of Irishmen, and to engender feelings of anger and animosity towards the people of this country? Was it not calculated to promote feelings of distrust and dislike between the people of the two countries? But it was satisfactory that the right hon. Baronet should have taken the opportunity of speaking on the same day as he had done, and of bestowing such encomiums upon the Catholic clergy of Ireland. More lasting measures than the present were, however, wanting. Temporary relief and the distribution of alms in charity, would be useless beyond the moment. The great want was employment. The people of Ireland had had their expectations raised. They had been led to expect extensive employment, and means should be adopted for that purpose. He recommended the Government to attend to the suggestion of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. W. S. O'Brien), and to appoint a Committee of Irishmen to whom all measures relating to Ireland should be submitted.

MR. JOHN O'CONNELL said, that if outdoor relief were to be established in Ireland, it would amount to an utter confiscation of property. The system had been tried in England, and it had not succeeded. Its effects would be disastrous in Ireland.

MR. P. S. BUTLER: As it appeared to be expected that every Irish Member should deliver his opinions upon the question, he begged to offer a very few observations. He should vote against the Motion of the hon. Member for Stroud. The funds at the disposal of the Poor Law guardians in Ireland were totally insufficient. The hon. Member proceeded to give several instances of the straitened circumstances in which some of the Unions were placed, and amongst others stated, that in the Kilkenny Union, of which he himself had been one of the first-elected guardians, a cheque which he had drawn upon the bank, in discharge of a debt for the supply of some articles of food to the Union, had been dishonoured, and upon his applying at the bank to know the reason, he was laughed at by the clerk, who told him that no fewer than 144 similar cheques had been dishonoured for want of funds.

MR. SCROPE explained, that he had certainly not meant that the ablebodied poor should be relieved at their own homes. His object was merely to prevent their actually starving. However, as several hon. Gentlemen seemed to think that the discussion had better be taken at another time, and that the Bill should be permitted at once to go into Committee, he would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment withdrawn. House in Committee upon the Bill.

The various clauses were passed with verbal Amendments.

House resumed. Report to be received, and Bill read a third time on the next day.

House adjourned at a quarter to Six.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 19, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª. Out-Pensioners' Services (Chelsea and Greenwich); Out-Pensioners' Payment (Greenwich and Chelsea); South Sea Company.
2ª. Metropolitan Buildings.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From the Company of Brewers of the City of London, and Trustees of the Bookbinders' Provident Asylum, Ball's Pond Road, praying to be Exempted from the Operation of the Charitable Trusts Bill.—From Guardians of the Magherafelt Union, for Alteration of the Irish Poor Law.—From Great Torrington, Bradford, and Hollacombe, for Protection of the Agricultural Interest.—From the Presbytery of Dee, in favour of the Turnpike Roads (Scotland) Bill.—From Farmers and others of Happing, for Alteration of the Tithe Commutation Act.

IRISH POOR LAWS—PRIVILEGE.

The EARL of CLANCARTY having presented a petition from a Union in Ireland against the Irish Poor Law Bill,

LORD BROUGHAM wished to ask the noble Lord the Chairman of the Irish Poor Law Committee, whether it was true that that Committee had been stayed and obstructed in the proceedings yesterday by the refusal on the part of a witness to produce certain papers, he being fortified in his refusal by the Poor Law Commissioners? He (Lord Brougham) could not have be-

lieved the monstrous fact if he had not seen and spoken with the witness alluded to, Mr. Gulson, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, upon the subject.

The EARL of CLANCARTY said, that the fact, as stated by the noble and learned Lord, was quite true; but it had since been ascertained that the papers would be produced to-morrow.

LORD BROUGHAM: This is an obstruction of the proceedings of the Committee; and by it a grave offence against our privileges has been committed. My Lords, the Poor Law Commissioners must be informed that it is at their high peril that they refuse to produce any documents that are demanded by one of your Committees from a witness. And, then, to say that Mr. Gulson should obtain their permission first! We do not want their permission. The Committee has only to report to the House that they are so obstructed and stayed in their proceedings by reason of the non-production of this document, and this House will give them, if they have not the power themselves, a specific order of the House for the production of the papers they may require.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS, having unfortunately been absent from the Committee on the occasion, begged to ask his noble Friend whether these papers, to produce which so much reluctance had been exhibited, were not marked "private and confidential."

The EARL of CLANCARTY said, that although the papers in question were marked "private and confidential," according to the statement of the witness, they were the instructions of the witness, and the only means of carrying out the orders of the Poor Law Commissioners.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, he had not had the honour of assisting his noble Friend on the Committee the day upon which this circumstance occurred, and being unwilling to prejudge any set of men, or assume they were in error before he had positive evidence on the subject, was inclined to suppose it might yet turn out that the Poor Law Commissioners had directed Mr. Gulson, not of his own accord, to offer to produce certain documents which they would have been willing and ready to produce if called for by order of the House. But he was decidedly of opinion that the Poor Law Commissioners had no right to withhold documents that were marked "private and confidential," because their Lordships, by obtaining partial information only, would be left in a worse position than if they had got no information at all.

The EARL of CLARE said, that there was no ground for the supposition of the noble Lord, as Mr. Gulson had been positively forbidden by the Poor Law Commissioners to produce the papers in question. The Committee, therefore, ordered the witness to withdraw, and stopped the proceedings, intending to appeal to the House. In the meantime, the Poor Law Commissioners thought better of it, and agreed to produce the papers. In justice to Mr. Gulson, he must say that no indisposition to produce them had been evinced on his part; that he had been ordered by his superiors not to produce them; and that he had merely thought it right to obey that order, and await the decision of their Lordships' House.

LORD CAMPBELL thought there must be some misunderstanding on the subject; for he could not believe that the Poor Law Commissioners were so ignorant of the law as to do anything so preposterous and absurd, as to direct that those documents should not be produced before their Lordships' Committee. Be the documents what they might it was for the Committee, and not for the Commissioners by their orders beforehand, to settle what documents should be produced before the Committee.

LORD BROUGHAM: My Lords, the Poor Law Commissioners are wholly without excuse in this manner. The document is not a private letter at all. I have read Mr. Gulson's letters to the Commissioners, to ask leave to produce the document before the Committee. That document contained his instructions from them. But the answer was, that he was not to produce the letter, because it was "private and confidential." Good God! my Lords, is a public department—the most delicate perhaps to administer of all—to be allowed to give to its officers public instructions to be produced when called for, and private and confidential instructions which are not to be produced? I am the less disposed to concede this, because I see that the discretion of the Commissioners has been at fault on other occasions. I have read Mr. Parker's case, and though I shall not say anything to prejudge a matter now undergoing investigation in another place, yet this I will tell them, that I have defended them through good report and through bad report when they were in the right: in the nomination of some of them I had a hand, and therefore I feel responsible for

them; but I warn them to attend more to the letter of Acts of Parliament—to the will of Parliament—and to do their duty without fear of the newspapers; for that charge I make against them, that in Mr. Parker's case they have acted, and have avowed that they have acted, through fear of the press.

Subject dropped.

METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS BILL.

Viscount CANNING moved the Second Reading of the Metropolitan Buildings Bill. Their Lordships would remember that in the Session of 1844 an Act was passed, the object of which was to repeal the old Building Act of 1774, which had been found inefficient for the purposes it was intended, namely, for establishing and defining a well-digested and well-regulated code of rules, by which metropolitan buildings should be erected and repaired, with a view to the safety and comfort of the public. The country had had more than a year's experience of the new measure; and he was bound to admit that in several respects defects were apparent in the Bill. It was scarcely to be expected to be otherwise in a measure so full of details as this necessarily was, and affecting so many interests, and interests of such various kinds. The consequence had been, that many representations of different sorts had been addressed to the Government, setting forth the real or supposed defects of the measure, and pointing out what the complainants considered would be the proper remedies to be applied. Some of those representations contained suggestions, and others complaints, many of which, no doubt, were unreasonable; while, on the other hand, he must admit, others were founded upon just and reasonable grounds. Where the latter was the case, the Government had considered it to be their duty to take those complaints or suggestions into consideration, with a view to devise some remedy for the defects complained of. The Bill upon their Lordships' Table, therefore, was only the Bill of 1844, containing several Amendments, which had been thought necessary in consequence of the representations which had been made to the Government. At a later period of the Session he should deem it his duty to bring the whole of the corrections before their Lordships, embodied in a Bill, if any further Amendments were proposed. In the mean time it would only be necessary for him to refer to the amended clauses on the Act of 1844, which described the machinery by which it was proposed to carry it out. Under the Act of 1844, there were two official referees appointed. A subsequent clause in the Bill directed the appointment of a third officer, who was called the registrar, whose duty it was to put upon record the decisions of the official referees, and as it was understood that this officer would generally be a barrister, to act as a sort of legal assessor to them, by affording them advice upon legal matters. The clause also provided that the award of one referee was final and binding, if the seal of the registrar was affixed to it. This was calculated to lead to great inconvenience, inasmuch as the referees might give different awards; and the one which received the seal of the registrar, who was not supposed to be practically acquainted with the details of building, was final. Her Majesty's Government had deemed it their duty to seize the earliest opportunity of removing this obstruction; and for that purpose they proposed to appoint an additional referee who should possess co-ordinate powers with the other two; and, of course, from the mere fact of there being three referees, in case of disagreement, a decision would be come to by a majority of referees acquainted with the subject. The most formidable objection to the appointment of this third referee was the additional expense. By the Act of 1844 the salaries of these referees were partly borne by the Consolidated Fund, and partly by the city of London, and the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent. The salary of each referee was 1,000*l.*; but by the additional appointment it was not proposed to increase the expense, as one of the parties had retired on account of the condition which had been heretofore attached to the office, that he should be debarred from pursuing his ordinary professional avocations: the Government now proposed to appropriate this sum to the payment of 500*l.* per annum each to the successor of this gentleman and the third referee, and to permit them to pursue their own private practice as surveyors. He hoped no objection would be offered to the passing of this Bill, so that it might go into Committee next day.

Lord COLBORNE said, there never was a Bill passed that had met with more objections, and had so little answered the purposes for which it was intended, as the Metropolitan Buildings Act of 1844. He

could speak to the inefficiency of the measure, and he was gratified in hearing the noble Viscount express his intention to introduce a new Bill during the present Session; and he trusted that the provisions of that Bill would be such as would do away with the necessity of constant complaint against it on the part of the public, by providing a proper and efficient remedy for the existing defects.

Lord CAMPBELL did not rise to oppose the second reading of the Bill; but he must say that he thought the only way to remedy the evil would be to repeal the Bill of 1844 altogether. He was convinced, that to attempt to patch up that Bill would only be to make confusion worse confounded. He and some noble Friends of his foretold the difficulties that would ensue; but in vain. His noble Friend had given but a faint idea of the confusion that had been occasioned. So very defective was the Act, that he thought few of those noble Lords who supported it in 1844 had read it through. The present Bill touched only two or three clauses out of some hundred or more equally objectionable; and he would suggest to the noble Lord (Lord Canning) that the better course would be to withdraw the present Bill, and bring in another more comprehensive, or, at least, one to repeal the Act of 1844, and allow buildings to be regulated for the present by the old Building Act of 1774, which, whatever its defects, was perfection, compared with the present.

The Duke of BUCCLEUCH said, he had read the Bill of 1844 several times while it was before the House. He did not say that the Act was not in many points capable of improvement; but it was almost impossible to propose a measure of such a nature, dealing as it did with various interests, and involving many complicated matters, that should be in the first instance altogether free from objection. Questions of doubt were seen to arise, and objections to be made especially by those whose acts it was most necessary to control. He should much regret to see the Act repealed altogether, as the noble and learned Lord suggested; for it was absolutely necessary for the safety of the buildings and the health of the people that stringent measures should be taken.

Lord ASHBURTON regretted that no measure had hitherto passed for abolishing the smoke nuisance in the metropolis. So serious had that nuisance become, owing to the establishment of so many manufactories, and the introduction of steam-engines, that the citizens of London were only by great accident ever permitted to see the sun, unless they went some miles out of town for that purpose. He was informed, that, by a very small expenditure, the nuisance might be abated in nearly all cases.

Lord CAMPBELL had granted two or three patents, while he held the office of Attorney General, any one of which would be effectual for remedying the nuisance of which the noble Lord complained, and that not only without any great expense, but with considerable economy, by diminishing the cost of fuel. He was inclined to agree that measures to compel the adoption of a remedy should be passed.

The Duke of BUCCLEUCH reminded the House that a Bill passed some Sessions ago for compelling manufacturers to consume their own smoke in the manufacturing towns.

Bill read 2ª.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 19, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1°. Schoolmasters' Widows Fund (Scotland); County Elections.

Reported. Consolidated Fund (£8,000,000); Fever (Ireland).

3°. and passed. Fever (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Octavius Duncombe, from Newton, Sproxton, Beadlam, and Pockley, in favour of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Lockhart, from Deacon, Convener, Collector, and other Members of the Trades' House of Glasgow, against the Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Mr. Hume, from the Parishioners of Saint Luke, Chelsea, against Union with other Parishes.—By Mr. Redhead Yorke, from Elizabeth Mason, of No. 4, Silver Street Groves, York, for Inquiry respecting Joseph Mason.

AQUEDUCTS—STANDING ORDERS.

Mr. HUME rose to move—

"That in case of Bills for making, maintaining, varying, extending, or enlarging any Aqueduct, Archway, Bridge, Weir, Canal, Cut, Dock, Ferry, Harbour, Navigation, Pier, Port, Railway, Reservoir, Tunnel, Turnpike Road, and Water Work, and for all other works and inclosures on tidal lands within the ordinary spring tides, a general Plan showing the situation and approaches to the said Aqueduct, Archway, Harbour, &c., should be denoted upon a sheet or sheets of the Ordnance Survey, when published, or else upon Maps of an equivalent scale, and extending ten miles on each side; together with enlarged Plans and Sections of such parts of the works as are on the tidal lands within the ordinary spring tides, on a scale of not less than twenty feet to an inch, with the dimensions figured thereon, shall, on or before the 30th day of November, be deposited in the Board of Admiralty."

As the law at present stood, the hon. Mem-

ber said, no Bill for making, varying, extending, or enlarging any railway, harbour, bridge, canal, pier, tunnel, or other work, which should interfere with tidal water, would pass the House unless the Admiralty had signified their approbation. A great number of Bills, which would so interfere, were thrown upon the Admiralty at once, in the beginning of the Session, and it was quite impossible for the Board to make up their minds upon the several merits of those Bills without a careful examination. To make that examination, required considerable time, the Admiralty having no means of knowing the nature of the projected works until they were thus suddenly placed before them; and it would be as much for the benefit and convenience of the promoters themselves, as for the convenience of the Board of Admiralty, that the Board should have due time and opportunity to examine into the merits of the projects before they came before the House. For those reasons he wished that the plans and sections should be lodged in the Admiralty Office.

CAPTAIN BERKELEY, in supporting the Motion, said, that there was a very strong case in point illustrative of the necessity which existed for such an order. It was that of the Great Western Railway Company, which had proposed last year to cross the river Severn, over the tidal water, by means of a bridge. The Admiralty very properly opposed such an interference with the navigation of the river, and threw out the Bill; yet the Great Western Company, notwithstanding that defeat, had actually brought in another Bill, and were trying to get it passed, and the effect of it would be to cross the river by another bridge, not far removed from the proposed site of the former.

SIR G. COCKBURN said, that the proposal of the hon. Member for Montrose would obviate many inconveniences with regard to Bills proposing to interfere with navigable rivers.

Motion agreed to; as well as a Motion to compel promoters of Bills at present before the House, which would come under the action of the Standing Order just passed, to send copies of plans, sections, &c., without delay to the Admiralty.

RAILWAY TERMINI IN THE METROPOLIS.

MR. WILSON PATTEN, in rising to call the attention of the House to the Sixth Report of the Railways Classification Committee, said that he was directed by the Committee to state that they had nearly come to the termination of their labours. They had placed the different Railway Bills sent before them in groups; but on coming to those, the objects of which were to make lines through, and have termini, in the metropolis, they had resolved that they formed so peculiar a class, and had bearings of so important a nature, that they ought to make it the subject of an Address to the Crown for the appointment of a Commission to investigate and report upon them. The Committee found the question so important, that it could not come to the same resolutions with regard to them as it had arrived at in other cases, and thought that its duty required it to bring the question before the House. The metropolitan lines the Committee had divided into three classes: first, those that were originally intended to have been brought before Parliament during the present Session, but which were, for various reasons, postponed to another Session; second, those that had been proposed, but withdrawn; third, and finally, those that were to be brought before Parliament during the present Session. In the consideration of those Bills there appeared so much good and so much evil to the metropolis, that the Committee thought they should be carried before another tribunal, where they could be exclusively considered. He had brought with him a map, on which was marked all the proposed stations in the metropolis, and he could not call the attention of the House more forcibly to the effects which would be produced by their erection, than by stating that the mere surface of the ground to be occupied by them would amount to 200 acres; that the works would involve the necessity of taking down between 9,000 and 10,000 houses; and that the property to be taken, had the schemes all been carried out, would have been in value about 15,000,000*l*. He should not state the case fairly to the House if he did not explain that that was the total estimate for all the plans originally proposed, including those withdrawn and postponed, but that by no means so great an amount remained to be considered. However, some of those that remained involved matters of very serious consideration. Some of the proposed termini were to be placed in the very heart of the city. One was to be in Farringdon-street; another was proposed to be placed in Thames-street; another on Cornhill; and another, or rather two, in

Holborn; another—but it would be unnecessary to go through the enumeration of them all. There were several to be erected in various places. He hoped he had said enough to show the necessity for the establishment of such a tribunal as that recommended by the Committee. It had been given in evidence that from one station alone, on the other side of the Thames, 400,000 passengers were last year despatched. The object was to send these and many more from the heart of the metropolis; and the Committee thought it much better that the subject should be investigated by persons of science, and practical as well as local knowledge, than by a Committee upon the mere exhibition of maps and plans. By the orders of the House it was also provided that no Member connected with the district of a railway should sit upon a Committee, so that in this instance the Members for London, Southwark, &c., who possessed local information, were necessarily excluded. It had been suggested that public accommodation might be obtained without going into the heart of the metropolis, and a Committee had met to determine whether some central point could not be fixed upon from which the lines of the railways leading from London might diverge; but he doubted how far this was practicable. At all events, this and other matters were fit questions for inquiry by a Commission. The more regular mode would have been for the Classification Committee to have made this recommendation in writing; but as delay was on all accounts to be avoided, the Committee had instructed him to make this Motion at once. If the House should be of opinion that a Commission was not expedient, of course the Committee would proceed with its duty, and would group the various Bills relating to railways intended to have their termini in the metropolis. He moved an Address to her Majesty, for the appointment of a Commission to investigate and report upon the various railway projects of which the termini are proposed to be established within or in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis.

Sir R. PEEL had no doubt that the Committee had been influenced by sufficient reasons for the course it had pursued, rather leaving their Chairman to state the grounds of the Motion than to embody them in a report; the consequence, however, was, that it precluded the House from maturely considering a question which, submitted by such Committee, could not fail to deserve every respect. He doubted whether the House could conveniently proceed at once to decide the matter merely on the verbal statements of a Member. Where so many interests were involved, it seemed expedient that the House and the Government should have time to deliberate, and if the debate were now adjourned it might be resumed on an early day. He proposed, therefore, that the present discussion be deferred until Monday, when he should be prepared to state the course Ministers were disposed to take after communicating with those who had Railway Bills connected with stations near the metropolis.

Mr. FOX MAULE remarked, that if the Classification Committee, of which he was a Member, had made a formal written report, it must have been accompanied by maps and plans, and when they were put into the hands of an engraver, it was impossible to say when they would be ready to be brought before the House; it had therefore been deemed best that the Chairman should state the case, leaving it to the House, if it saw sufficient reason, at once to agree to the Motion for the appointment of a body capable of forming the most sound and practical judgment, accompanied also by due consideration of the sanatory effect of the proposed scheme upon the metropolis. Whatever was done should be accomplished in the least possible time, in order that business now in progress should be interrupted as little as possible. The proposal of the right hon. Baronet to give the decision of Government on Monday was perfectly satisfactory; but he had no doubt that it would see reason to appoint a Commission.

Sir G. GREY thought that the object of the Commission, if appointed, ought to be clearly defined. From the observations of the right hon. Baronet, and from those of the hon. Mover, it might be supposed that it was intended to supersede the functions of the Committee of Classification; but the Commission ought only to be appointed for the purpose of furnishing information, which ought to be referred back to the Committee.

Sir R. H. INGLIS wished to direct attention to one point not unimportant. He understood that two or three schemes, not abandoned, were intended to terminate in the city itself, and not to be extended to the Thames, the greatest highway in the world. In his opinion this stopping short of the river would deprive the station of

half its utility. One station was to be immediately opposite Hungerford-market, and another in Farringdon-street; but if the latter were not carried to the banks of the river, it would only imperfectly accomplish the objects in view.

MR. LABOUCHERE held it extremely desirable, in the present state of railway business, that Government should exercise a more powerful interference. Every portion of the information before the Classification Committee had been in the hands of Ministers in November last, and they might then have made up their minds that the appointment of a Commission would be the best mode of investigating this subject. The plan for the purpose ought to have been prepared and organized at the beginning of the Session, and much delay would have been avoided. He had been told that it was of the utmost importance to decide the question speedily; for if the parties were thrown over to next year, the price of the necessary land would be enormously raised by speculators, and the promoters exposed to the greatest possible disadvantage. After the manner in which the interference of the Board of Trade was received last year, he was not much surprised that Government had taken no steps in this matter; the Railway Committee of the Board of Trade had been exposed, first, to the great difficulty of their undertaking; and, secondly, to the powerful railway interest in the House; but it was unfortunate that Government did not earlier take the course it was now about to adopt. It was proposed by the right hon. Baronet to postpone the question till Monday; but he confessed that his mind was now made up on the question. He was clearly of opinion, that the subject would be better investigated by a Commission than by a Committee; and again he expressed his regret that the Commission had not been appointed at an earlier period: even the delay that had occurred might interpose considerable difficulties.

SIR R. PEEL observed, that as to the particular proposal, his mind also was made up; and for two or three days past, since the notice had been given, Government had directed its best attention to the subject. It had gone so far as to enter into communication with persons well qualified to form the Commission: so that, although the decision of the House should be postponed till Monday, no time would be lost. As the matter was left to the Chairman of the Committee, it seemed to him a novel course at once to proceed to a decision; it would be establishing, as he thought, a dangerous precedent. This was his ground for proposing an adjournment; and he considered it sufficient. His right hon. Friend would to-morrow give notice of the course to be pursued on Monday; so that all parties would have full knowledge of the intentions of Government.

MR. WILSON PATTEN admitted that the course was on some accounts objectionable; and if time had allowed, the Committee would have made a written Report, accompanied by maps and plans.

MR. HUME seemed to think that the right hon. Member (Mr. Labouchere) had thrown a reflection on the Railway Committee of the Board of Trade. He was of opinion that it was not deserved. He had never spoken to the noble Lord at the head of it last year for five minutes in his life; but he must say that he had devoted his time to the subject with most praiseworthy diligence and remarkable ability. Mr. Porter also had done his duty; the only objection being, that he had been taken away from his own department. They had done their work in a most independent and laborious manner; and he hoped that his right hon. Friend would say that he did not mean to cast any such reflection: such a course was most discouraging to public men.

MR. LABOUCHERE had never intended to cast any reflection; but he thanked his hon. Friend for giving him the opportunity of setting himself right if he had been misunderstood. From his own connexion with the Board of Trade, he was well acquainted with several of the Members of the Railway Committee: some he knew personally, others by character, and of the integrity and talent of all he entertained the highest opinion—to them the public was deeply indebted. To the noble Lord who presided, the country was under great obligations. His opinion had been, last year, and he continued to hold it still, that the constitution of that body was not such as it ought to have been, considering the enormous interests with which it had to deal. In so saying, he hoped he should not be understood as implying the slightest personal reflection on the character of any Gentleman.

SIR G. CLERK had not been a Member of the Committee of the Board of Trade, and begged to add his testimony in favour of the indefatigable zeal and irreproachable fidelity with which it had discharged its duties. The interference of Government

last year had been viewed with much jealousy; and some of the decisions of the Committee of the Board of Trade had been overruled, which would have been highly beneficial if they had been confirmed. On this account Ministers could not originate a Commission: however constituted, and whatever it recommended, there would have been a strong prejudice against it. Circumstances were now different; and as the suggestion came from the Committee, he saw no difficulty in complying with it. The hon. Member (Mr. W. Patten) was slightly mistaken as to the Gauge Commission; for it had not been appointed until after a debate and a division, and until parties had had due notice. He trusted on Monday that the House would be prepared to come to a decision; for delay at the present moment must be highly injurious.

The debate adjourned until Monday.

THE GREAT LIVERPOOL STEAMER.

SIR G. GREY rose, pursuant to the notice he had given, to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Admiralty, whether the Admiralty intended to institute any inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the Great Liverpool Steamer. As the vessel was not one of Her Majesty's ships, it did not fall directly within the jurisdiction of the Admiralty to institute an inquiry; but as this vessel carried the mails, and had one of Her Majesty's officers on board, a general feeling prevailed that there was a necessity for more than ordinary care, and that an inquiry might properly be instituted by the Admiralty. All he thought it necessary to add was, that he was not desirous of giving pain to any parties; but as a strong feeling prevailed upon the subject, he thought it right to put the question to the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

MR. CORRY said, that this was a case which did not fall properly under the cognizance of the Admiralty. The only parties on board connected with the Government were the mail contractors, and upon them no responsibility as to the management of the ship rested. Their duty consisted exclusively in taking care of the mails; and upon the Oriental and Peninsular Steam-Navigation Company all the care and responsibility as to the vessel depended. Such being the case, the Lords of the Admiralty had thought it objectionable to lay down a precedent for instituting an inquiry where the parties concerned did not serve under the Crown. The company themselves, however, had determined to institute an investigation, and had requested the Admiralty to appoint a naval officer to superintend that investigation. That request the Admiralty had also, for the reasons he had already stated, felt itself bound to refuse; but they had recommended the company to apply to the Trinity House for one of the officers attached to that corporation. The Admiralty had also directed the Admiralty agent to attend the investigation, and to afford every information in his power to forward the proper objects which the company had in view.

MR. P. M. STEWART, as chairman of the Oriental Steam Company, thanked the right hon. Member for Devonport for bringing the subject under the notice of the House. It was a matter of the deepest and most anxious interest, and the company had no other wish but that it should be publicly and thoroughly investigated. Life and property were entrusted to the company, and they were not in the habit of allowing any instance of supposed negligence to pass without the strictest scrutiny. They had carried many thousand persons many thousand miles, and this was the first serious accident that had occurred. Many months ago the company thought that some symptoms of carelessness had been evinced, and they had issued the most stringent orders to the commanders of their vessels: they had reminded them, that as the compasses of steam-boats were likely to be deranged and untruthful, it was their duty always to apply to the superintendent at Southampton. They had also been most earnestly enjoined, on approaching land, especially in dark and foggy weather, to use the utmost vigilance, and in no instance to dispense with the use of the lead. Captain Macleod had been for ten years in the service of the company, had conducted himself with diligence and fidelity, and was especially popular with passengers. He was expected home to-morrow, and the investigation would be commenced immediately. The company had appointed three nautical men belonging to the Board for the purpose, and had applied to the Admiralty that it would appoint an officer to be a member of the Court of Inquiry. He (Mr. P. M. Stewart) regretted that the application had been declined, but trusted that the officers of the Trinity House would supply the deficiency. He would only add that when the tribunal, after completing the investigation, had arrived at an opinion,

its sentence ought to be made as public as the fate of the unfortunate vessel.

FEVER (IRELAND).

SIR J. GRAHAM moved the Order of the Day for receiving the Report on the Fever (Ireland) Bill. He would take this opportunity of stating, with reference to the intended Amendment of the hon. Member for Rochdale, that, modified as it had been, no objection would be made to it.

MR. SHARMAN CRAWFORD said, that it would not be necessary to detain the House with any preface to his Amendment, because it had been adopted by Government, although not precisely in the terms he had employed. He would move, that after the words "medical appliances," these be added, "including nutriment, if necessary for their cure, in the cases where the poor persons are destitute."

Amendment agreed to. Bill ordered to be read a third time the same day.

RAILWAYS.

MR. MORRISON, in bringing forward the Motion of which he had given notice, respecting Railways, said that as he found there was to be no opposition offered to the proposition, he should probably best consult the wishes of the House by not entering upon the subject at such length as he might otherwise have been induced to do. At the same time he trusted he might be permitted to occupy a few moments in stating generally what were the leading objects of his Motion. He considered that the experience of the last year, not only in England, but the other countries of Europe, had been most important, as it had shown that the development of traffic had gone on in a way not to have been anticipated by the most sanguine; and he proposed to show by the committee he was about to move for, that the system of cheap fares had everywhere been most advantageous and profitable, and that in almost every case the Companies which had tried the experiment had not been injured but benefited by that system. He also proposed to inquire to what extent it was practicable, by some general regulations, to relieve the Railway Committees from the weight of business with which they were at present oppressed. Lastly, he proposed to bring before the Committee the important subject of the granting of leases of lines, instead of concessions in perpetuity. The railway system had been so recently introduced, and had extended itself with such rapidity, that there had been little time to give to the whole subject a calm consideration; but in the course of the past year it had been found, not only in this country but in others—in Belgium, France, and America—that there had been a remarkable increase of traffic, and to a certain degree a uniform increase. Our experience was yet inadequate to determine what the exact ratio of that increase was likely to be. That it must increase with the wealth and population of the country there could be no doubt; and to that must be added the progression or increase of business caused by the railways themselves; but looking to all the circumstances, the supposition might be risked that the traffic on the great lines, between towns of large population, would double itself in the next ten or fifteen years. Should such be the opinion of the House, it would probably think it necessary to reserve to itself the right of revising the fares at periods considerably under twenty years apart. One of the most important subjects which could engage the attention of the Committee would be the effect of the reduction of fares, as proved wherever the system had been attempted, in increasing the traffic, and in some, if not in most cases, improving instead of diminishing the revenue. The scale of charges which would be found most productive might vary to some extent with the circumstances of each particular case; but it appeared evident to him that the scale most advantageous to all parties was much lower than anything hitherto attempted in this country. He believed that the rates charged in Belgium would at no distant time be thought quite sufficient here. It was known that on the lines recently adjudicated in France, the fares fixed for passengers had been, for the first, second, and third class respectively, 10, $7\frac{1}{2}$, and 5 centimes per kilometre, with an allowance of thirty kilogrammes, or 66 lb. of luggage to each person, these rates being somewhat proportionate to $1\frac{1}{2}d.$, $1\frac{1}{4}d.$, and $1d.$, including the 10 per cent additional tax to Government. Now these lines were known to stand at considerable premiums; and the Paris and Orleans Company, which was limited to the same rates, was highly prosperous, and its shares were at a very high premium indeed—a success which he had never been able to account for on any other ground than the lowness of the fares. Let it not be forgotten that France presented far fewer advantages than England in respect to railway enterprise. The population there was less

per square mile than ours; the towns were neither so numerous nor so large; their manufactures were unimportant when compared to ours; and their foreign trade more limited; so that to supply the same number of people they were obliged to lay down a longer line of rail than we needed. Then, with respect to the conduct of railway business, he thought that hon. Members would acknowledge that the attempt of last year had been a failure. Had he gone fully into the subject, he might have endeavoured to show how strange and contradictory had been the different decisions arrived at by the Committees, and how various had been the rates fixed for passengers and goods, ranging from a penny to fourpence per mile. In one instance he had been told that with respect to so important an article as coal, the difference of charge for carriage between one line supplying Manchester, and another line, was 250 per cent. If such disparity as this prevailed, it must be injurious; and surely much advantage would be derived from such great variations being hereafter corrected by some general regulation. With respect to the subject of leases, it was a matter which rather concerned the House and the country than the railway companies. It would be for the House to consider whether the practice of granting leases for terminable periods, instead of in perpetuity, might not with great advantage be adopted in this country. Experience had shown that parties were quite willing to undertake the whole cost of constructing railways in France to be held for terminable periods. This was in fact mainly a matter of policy on the part of the State. Of course a sinking fund would have to be provided out of the profits, in order to reimburse the original expenditure at the expiration of the lease. And that was no real hardship to companies. The whole transaction resembled a loan to the State, made on the principle of terminable annuities, by which the lender agreed to receive an annual payment for a term of years, instead of in perpetuity, and calculated the amount of this annual payment according to the length of the term. It therefore appeared to him that there could not be two opinions upon the subject, and that if it were practicable to get our new railroads undertaken upon this principle, it was most desirable that no time should be lost in adopting it. No one could pretend to estimate to what extent the railway system might be carried in twenty or thirty years, or what might be the effect of improvements in cheapening the cost of locomotion during that interval. But it was manifestly desirable that the State should, as early as possible, obtain the control of those lines of public communication. If we adopted this system of leases, which had been so successfully introduced into France, every Railway Act that was passed would have the effect of a conversion of so much of our national debt into annuities terminable with the expiration of the leases, without the sacrifice of one shilling by the State. For as soon as the lease of a line expired, it would become the absolute property of the State, and might either be sold, and its value applied directly in reduction of the public debt; or worked or let for the benefit of the State, and the revenue derived from it applied in relief of the general taxation of the country. And it might safely be assumed that from the progressive increase of traffic, and improvement in our railway science, the productiveness and value of almost every line would be far greater at the termination of the lease than at present. He would never advise the House to give up the principle of competition, for it was a very valuable one; but competition was not enough. In the case of the Bank of England it had been admitted that competition was not enough; and he thought the right hon. Baronet, if he would devote a little attention to the subject, would acknowlenge that in the case of railways, as well as of banking, something more than competition was necessary. He had stated that the experience of the last year had been of infinite value as regarded railways. That of the next three years would be more so; and, indeed, the experience of every succeeding year would furnish additional evidence as to the extent to which the increase of traffic was likely to be carried. That there were the means of working railways in this country on terms more advantageous to the public than in France, could not be a matter of doubt, upon comparing the resources and relative amount of population of each. The hon. Member illustrated this position by reading the following statistical details:—

"Population of France in 1842, 34,213,929, and dividing this sum by the area of 203,736 square miles, the population for each square mile is 167,932. The population per square mile in England is at present 297,698; and of Great Britain, 210,476. The trade and mercantile marine of France are quite inconsiderable compared with those of Britain. In 1844, the total customs revenue of France amounted to 215,825,704 francs,

or 8,633,628*l.*; whereas the total customs revenue of the United Kingdom, during the same year, amounted to 24,107,348*l.* In 1844, the customs revenue of Liverpool amounted to 4,487,664; while the customs revenue of Marseilles, which has the largest trade of any town in France, amounted during the same year to only 36,688,000 francs, or 1,467,520*l.* And, with the exception of Havre, the customs revenue of which in 1844 amounted to 1,085,040*l.*, the customs revenue of no other town in France exceeds 500,000*l.*; whereas in this country the customs revenue of the Clyde amounted in 1843 to 938,514, that of Dublin to 977,890*l.*, that of Leith to 628,008, and that of Hull to 525,418*l.* The proportion of the population living in towns in Britain is incomparably greater than in France. This is evident from comparing the present population of the ten principal towns in each.

IN GREAT BRITAIN. Population, 1841 :—		IN FRANCE. Population, 1842 :—	
London	1,873,676	Paris	875,495
Manchester	296,183	Marseilles	147,191
Liverpool	286,487	Lyons	143,977
Glasgow	274,533	Bourdeaux	99,512
Birmingham	182,922	Rouen	90,580
Leeds	152,054	Toulouse	76,965
Edinburgh	138,182	Nantes	76,870
Bristol	122,296	Lille	63,063
Plymouth	80,059	Strasbourg	61,150
Sheffield	68,186	Amiens	44,405
	3,474,578		1,679,208

"The difference in the amount of shipping belonging to the principal English and French ports is equally remarkable, thus :—

Shipping exclusive of Steamers belonging to the ten principal English Ports in 1844.	Vessels.	Tonn.	Shipping exclusive of Steamers belonging to the ten principal French Ports in 1844.	Vessels.	Tonn.
London	2,792	573,522	Havre	342	64,004
Liverpl.	1,287	342,142	Bourdeaux	365	61,501
Newcst.	1,236	273,953	Nantes	541	60,520
Sunderl.	813	165,697	Marseilles	630	54,896
Glasgow	393	96,610	St. Malo	217	27,831
Greenock	447	86,617	Dunkirk	192	17,820
Hull	453	67,227	Granville	231	15,069
Whiteh.	389	60,204	Rouen	81	12,688
Aberdeen	352	51,550	Nouvelle	218	12,032
Dundee	326	48,920	Dieppe	174	10,837
	8,688	1,766,442		2,991	336,398

"Total shipping belonging to ports in the United Kingdom :—

Number of Vessels.	Tonnage.
22,297	2,848,149.

"Total shipping belonging to ports in France :—

Vessels.	Tonnage.
13,578	595,344.

"The total tonnage of France being very little more than that of the single port of London."

The hon. Member concluded by moving for—

"A Select Committee to inquire whether, without discouraging legitimate enterprise, conditions may not be embodied in Railway Acts better fitted than those hitherto inserted in them to promote and secure the interests of the public."

MR. MANGLES was inclined to think that much as the hon. Member had spoken of the importance of the subject he had brought under the consideration of the House, he had still underrated it. Great as was the importance of railways to the wealth and prosperity of the country, they were in fact only a branch and specimen of those many objects of public enterprise which, as the march of civilization advanced, must be provided for in this country. The subject embraced a wider scope than that avowed by the hon. Member, whose demand appeared to be, that the House should reconsider the whole system of policy, with respect to the prosecution of public works, the principle governing which had hitherto been, more than in any other country, to allow free play to individual enterprise, and to restrain the Executive Government from interference. The scope of the hon. Gentleman's Motion, if he understood it, was this—that the system hitherto prevailing in this country was altogether erroneous; that the system upon which other countries had conducted their public works was essentially right; and that great restrictions should be laid upon the system in this country of prosecuting public works. If he (Mr. Mangles) thought that the spirit of the hon. Gentleman's Motion was confined to railways only, he might regard it as right; but, viewed in connexion with other considerations of public policy, he thought it wrong. The average profits of railways in this country had not exceeded 5½ per cent; and in some lines, the capital not having been paid up, the companies had exercised the power of borrowing; and being able to borrow at a low rate of interest, had been in a condition to pay a higher dividend than if they had not borrowed. If the capital on all the railways had been paid up, he believed that the profits would not have averaged more than 3½ or 4 per cent. There was the Blackwall line, only three miles and a half long, which had been constructed at a cost of 3,000,000*l.*; in some years it had paid ¼ per cent, in other years nothing, and at present it was only paying 1¼ per cent. Yet that was a most useful line. In 1844 it had carried no less than 3,449,000 passengers, and it was a great object that such lines should be made, which they would not be unless there was a chance left for the projectors obtaining a prize. The hon. Member had alluded to the prosperous state of the railways in France, and the facilities given there for

the investment of capital; but if there had been no large prizes drawn in England, French railways would probably never have been made at all. It was probable, too, that it had not been for the large advantages derived from English railways—the prizes, as he called them—Jamaica and our West India Colonies would never have received the benefit of the railway system. He conceived it would be narrow and short-sighted policy, because men were making large profits, to put a restriction upon their enterprise. Did the House believe that the men who drew the prizes stopped where they were? that the men who had made fortunes in the Birmingham or Grand Junction Railway, for example, had now no part of their capital invested in those and other lines? He believed that much of that capital, its holders being encouraged by the success they had met with, was now embarked in other works. Indeed he knew that individuals, who had been encouraged by the success they had met with in those early railways, had now largely invested capital in railways in Ireland, Jamaica, and other places; and the places of those persons were now occupied by those who were content with smaller or slower profits. Much of the money now invested in the Jamaica and Irish lines had been acquired by former successful enterprise in England, and thus had been sent forward and circulated in those more recent public works. The hon. Gentleman had dwelt upon the excellency of the French system, but seemed to have forgotten the intermediate steps by which they had arrived at their present stage, and that in 1842 the French Government had offered large advantages, such as undertaking half the expense of constructing the railways; while, as a proof that the success in this country had been a means of enabling the French to construct their railways, those advantages offered by the law of 1842 were insufficient to persuade parties to come forward and avail themselves of them. If he had not been misinformed, the hon. Member himself had been one of those who drew back because the advantages offered by the French Government were less than they were fairly entitled to. He did not pretend to say that the French system was not the best for France; but look at the practical results of the two systems. In England that system of private enterprise, with which the hon. Gentleman had found fault, had been adopted and encouraged; and he found by the Report of the Gauge Commissioners that the number of miles of railway completed in the United Kingdom was 2,264; that the number of miles sanctioned in 1844 was 787; that the number of miles comprised in Bills that had passed the Commons, and seemed likely to be sanctioned, was about 2,840—making a grand total of miles of railway made, sanctioned, or likely to be sanctioned, up to July, 1845, in round numbers, 5,891. That was the result of the system with which the hon. Gentleman found so much fault. Now what was the result in France of the system pursued there? He had endeavoured to get the most accurate information on the subject, and he believed that the French had only 376 miles of railway actually open. The hon. Member had dwelt much upon the advantages to be derived to the public from the cheap fares on the French railways; but had he made any accurate calculations on the subject? Did he suppose that one-tenth of those enormous lines now open in England would have been constructed if we had pursued the French system from the beginning? Towards the north there was now railway communication almost to Newcastle, and westward to Exeter. In another direction a line was opened to Chester, and soon would be to Holyhead; while southward there were lines to Brighton and Dover; and eastward there was railway communication with Norwich. Now, he asked the hon. Gentleman to estimate the difference in profits which had accrued to the merchants of Liverpool or the manufacturers of Manchester from the great lines of communication, as compared with the difficulties of transit to Marseilles, the great emporium of French commerce, endured by the merchants of France. Was not that a consideration of importance? It really seemed as if the very excellence and energy of the English system were brought as arguments against it, and its success adduced as a reason for preferring the French system, which, so far, had been a signal failure. According to their own system, the French had had to pay a handsome premium to English capitalists on the Rouen and Orleans railways. It was a fact about which there could be no dispute, that very many of the French lines had been constructed by the employment of English capital; and now that the French had taken them into their own hands, it would be necessary for them to pay a considerable premium to the English capitalist, which was, in point of fact, a reward, and

a very just one, too, for his enterprise. His belief was, though he had not the documents there to prove it, that the present fares in England were very little higher than those sanctioned by the French Legislature. At any rate, he would venture to predict, that before the terms of the French leases were out, the English fares would be lower than the French tariff. As a step towards this result, he was authorized to state that in the Bill for amalgamating the London and Birmingham Railroad Company with other companies, those companies had voluntarily reduced their fares to the following maximum rates for all ordinary trains—namely, first class, 2*d.* per mile; second class, 1½*d.* per mile; third class, 1*d.* per mile (as fixed by Act of Parliament); and there would be a proportionate reduction on goods. In conclusion, he begged to observe, that he had not the slightest desire to oppose the Motion of the hon. Member for Inverness. He only hoped that the appointment of the Committee would be attended with results as beneficial as the hon. Member appeared to anticipate.

Mr. PARKER observed, that, notwithstanding he had given notice of another Motion in reference to railway legislation, rather more humble in its pretensions than the Motion under the consideration of the House, he had not the slightest intention of opposing the Resolution of the hon. Member for Inverness, nor of throwing the least impediment in its way. The course which he was about to take, in reference to this question, was forced upon him, not as a railway proprietor, but as the representative of a large mercantile community, whose interests were very much involved in the solution of this question, whether some precaution could not be devised, whereby the effects of the railway legislation now pending on the money and labour markets, might be provided against. At the commencement of the Session, a Committee had been appointed to take into consideration the question of railway legislation generally; and he was under the impression that one of the most important points to the consideration of which the Committee would have addressed itself was this, whether the expenditure of capital on railway enterprises had an injurious effect on the monetary system, and if so to what extent; but on referring to the Report, he was surprised to find that it contained no allusion whatever to the matter. He had procured from one of the officers of that House a statement of the progress of railway legislation up to the 17th of March; and, by a reference to this document, he found that the number of Bills which had gone through the Standing Orders Committee was 302, and that the number of petitions for Bills still under consideration, but which had not as yet undergone the purgatorial process, was 140. The hon. Member for Sunderland had, in the course of a noble speech which he made a short time since in that House, laid great stress on the cruel massacre of railway projects which was likely to take place when these projects came to be submitted to the test of the Standing Orders; but these anticipations of destruction had not been realized, for he found that of all the projects brought under the consideration of the Committee, only eleven had been thrown out for non-compliance with the Standing Orders; and in the case of two out of those eleven the Committee had reconsidered and reversed their decision. He did not mean to throw the slightest reflection on the Standing Orders Committee. He believed that they had discharged their duties with good sense and sound discretion; and he applauded the course they had pursued in eschewing that pedantic sort of caution which would dictate the throwing out of a Bill because of a mere clerical error; but he was sorry that precautions had not at an early period of the Session been taken by the House to provide against the injurious effects upon our monetary system of an extravagant and inordinate spirit of railway speculation. It would have been highly desirable if, at the commencement of the Session, some arrangement had been made, whether by means of a committee, or by a commission, to reduce the number of railway projects that were to be dealt with legislatively this Session to as small an amount as was consistent with the exigencies of the country; and to take care that projects of a secondary character, or such as were not of very pressing importance, should be reserved for another year. He would have had no objection that such projects should be advanced through the various stages of Committee this Session, and that the advantage of their position should be secured to them prospectively; but he feared that a serious derangement of the money and labour markets must inevitably result from the enormous number of enterprises which, under the present system, were likely to come into operation simultaneously. However, as this precaution had not been taken, the

only course was to let railway legislation take its course this year; but, anomalous and unprecedented as the proceeding might be, it appeared to him that a due regard for the interests of the community would require them for the future to take care to introduce into Railway Bills some clause putting off the execution of these schemes, for six, twelve, or eighteen months, as might appear most advisable, so that the evil might be avoided which was likely to result from a universal call for advances and deposits all over the country at the same moment. Either this ought to be done, or a power ought to be given to the Treasury of requiring that its assent should be procured before any proceedings of the company should take place with a view to the execution of their scheme. He feared that this course was not likely to meet with much approval at either side of the House, and yet it was one which he was sure would be attended with beneficial results.

MR. HUDSON: It was not my intention, Sir, to take any part in this debate unless an Amendment were moved to the Motion for the appointment of a Committee. Having found it to be the intention of Her Majesty's Government to grant the Committee, I should not, under ordinary circumstances, have thought it necessary to trouble the House with any observations or views of my own on this important question; but the hon. Member for Sheffield has referred to me in so pointed a manner, that I cannot refrain from giving some explanations with a view of setting him right. When I addressed the House on a former occasion, I observed that it had been stated by Her Majesty's Government, that 800 schemes had been deposited with the Board of Trade. I then stated, that I believed that a great number of those schemes would fail to make the deposits necessary to enable them to appear before Parliament; and I am happy to find myself now confirmed by the hon. Member himself, who has stated that out of 800 schemes only 440 have done what was requisite. So far it appears that I have been perfectly correct in my judgment. The next observation which I made had reference, not to the number of Bills likely to receive the sanction of Parliament, but to the amount of capital which would probably be required. On that point I stated that, in my opinion, not more than 100,000,000*l.* would be the actual amount; and I have no doubt that that calculation will prove to have been pretty nearly correct. If I recollect right, the amount of money actually deposited in the Bank of England was something like 10,000,000 or 11,000,000*l.*, being at the rate of 10 per cent upon the railway projects. I have no doubt that before the close of the Session we shall find my prediction as to the amount of money required very nearly realized. Sir, I shall now apply myself to the speech which has been delivered by the hon. Member for Sheffield with reference to the absorption of so large a capital in one class of undertakings in the course of two or three years. Now, I admit that the sum is large; but, in considering that question, I shall go into a calculation of the actual amount that will be required to be taken from the surplus capital of this country, in order to be employed in the construction of these works. I stated on the occasion to which I have referred, that one-fifth of the entire amount raised for the construction of railways went from the hands of the shareholders into those of the landed proprietors. Of the 100,000,000*l.* already mentioned, probably 20,000,000*l.* will be paid to the landowners for land which it will be necessary to purchase. Sir, that is no tax upon the surplus capital of the country; it is a mere transfer from the capitalists to the landowners. The landowner, as I stated before, either employs the money he receives in paying off mortgages, or hands it to a company engaged in constructing a railway, or employs it in some other way for his own advantage. Since the former debate, I have consulted other parties on this subject, and, from information which I possess, have ascertained certain important particulars, showing that a still further sum may be deducted from the capital. I will state my view of the matter, which I believe to be correct. The original cost of the London and Birmingham Railway was, I believe, about 45,000*l.* per mile, and of that sum 9,000*l.* per mile was paid to landowners. The Midland Railway cost about 40,000*l.* a mile—I believe the amount was 37,000*l.* or 38,000*l.*—and 6,000*l.* or 7,000*l.* was paid for land. Generally speaking, I believe that hitherto one-fifth of the whole amount has been thus expended. For royalties, for ballast, for sleepers, and for other items connected with land, there must be allowed a further sum of 5,000,000*l.*, which, like the money paid for the land itself, is not taken from the surplus capital of the country. Then I put the contractor's profit—it may be

more or less, but I take the general estimate and fair average; and I hope the hon. Member for Inverness will not think the amount too large—I say I put the profit of the contractor at ten per cent. No person, I think, can say that that is too large a remuneration for the capital so employed. Well, then, I think it probable that we shall see a decrease of from 2,000,000*l.* to 3,000,000*l.* in the poor rates, arising from the ample employment which will be given to the poor by these railway projects. I also think it probable that from 7,000,000*l.* to 9,000,000*l.* will be paid to labourers who would otherwise be unprofitably employed. On the whole, therefore, of the 100,000,000*l.* which you may be about to grant the power of raising, I think that not more than 50,000,000*l.* can be properly regarded as a tax on the surplus capital of the country. I do not think that that is a large amount, considering that twenty or thirty years ago we were raising from 80,000,000*l.* to 90,000,000*l.* in taxation; and that now, when we are better able to bear the burden, we are raising only about 50,000,000*l.* In 1844, 14,000,000*l.* was the amount of money allowed to be expended in railways. I sincerely believe, and to a large extent I can declare from my own knowledge, that most of that money has been expended, and that the principal lines are open, and in active operation. The 14,000,000*l.*, therefore, for which Bills were passed in 1844, I put out of the account altogether. The sum estimated by Sir R. Peel, with reference to the year 1845, was 50,000,000*l.*; and from the number of lines under my own direction, I am enabled to state, that from 200 to 300 miles of the railways, for which Bills were passed in 1845, will probably be opened some time during the autumn of next year. I wish to give the House all the information that I possess on this subject. I feel satisfied that there need be no alarm as to the employment of capital, provided it be well and profitably invested. I think it is far more important for Parliament to take care that they do not give power to construct lines which would be unproductive to the shareholders and useless to the public, than to place limits to the progress and enterprise of this great country. We ought to consider the large incomes which are now derived from railways, and which, generally speaking, are employed by many who have large surplus means, in the construction of other lines. Those who are called speculators, not being contented with making 4, 5, or 6 per cent, go out of old concerns to invest in new lines; while those lines which are paying a steady interest to that amount, are sought out by trustees and other parties who are seeking a fair interest, and do not choose to embark in speculation. I believe, therefore, most firmly, that there will be no serious inconvenience. Unless we have a momentary crisis, not arising from railways, but from any drain to which the country may be liable, I am satisfied that we need not be under any alarm as to the amount which we are about to sanction the employment of in these great public works. Let us consider what the country is now deriving from railways. I believe I may state the amount as 7,000,000*l.* a year. I make this statement on the authority of the weekly returns published in the newspapers. According to those returns, the average amount derived from railways is 140,000*l.* a week; it is now about 120,000*l.*, but this is a season at which a diminution may be expected. Any person who is acquainted with the subject will bear me out in saying, that when the new railways are opened, an amount at the rate of from 8,000,000*l.* to 9,000,000*l.* a year will be received from railways this year. There is thus an additional amount which may be applied in carrying out the new undertakings. Then, Sir, it must be recollected that, formerly, large sums were expended on canals, highways, and other works, which having become nearly useless, a less amount will be required for such purposes in future. I think, taking the whole of the circumstances into account, there is nothing alarming in the amount of money which we are about to expend. But there is a serious responsibility resting on Parliament to be careful that they sanction only such lines as will prove remunerative to the parties, and beneficial to the country. If I had thought that such a course would be attended with success, I should have moved an Amendment to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman for the appointment of a Committee. I believe that this House has in its possession full information to enable it to legislate, if it shall think proper to do so, on this great question; and I think that the hon. Member would have done himself more credit, and would have served the interests of the country better, if he had brought forward a Bill, the principle of which we might have discussed, embodying his views on this subject, than by moving for a Com-

mittee to spend some weeks in collecting and examining information that we already possess. Not two years ago, a Committee on the same subject sat for one-and-twenty days; and having examined six-and-twenty witnesses, they placed a large blue book on the Table, which I do not know whether the hon. Member ever read. They went further —they brought in a Bill. That Bill received the assent of the House, and the Government felt at that time that they had been met fairly by the railway world. Now, what is the meaning of the proposed limitations? I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there is nothing which this country so much deprecates, and which commercial men feel to be so great an injury to legitimate enterprise, as this constant meddling and this perpetual legislation. We want to rest on some firm basis. We want to know on what principle we are to enter upon these great commercial undertakings. When only two years have elapsed since the passing of a Bill, surely the hon. Member might give us two more. What new information has burst upon him? He has stated nothing which he did not know the last time the House legislated on this subject; and he has not, in my opinion, adduced a single reason for calling on the House to go into Committee, and to consider whether we ought to legislate on a question which was amicably settled by an arrangement which, I think, ought to continue for the next seven years. We ought to have some security for our property, and some rest from the constant agitation of legislation. The hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Morrison) has got an idea that railways are the most profitable speculations ever embarked in by private individuals. Why, Sir, if we only look at the history of canals, we shall find that railways have done nothing in comparison; and yet our forefathers never attempted to interfere with canal charges and canal property. Why not let railway property stand on as stable a foundation? Her Majesty's Government seem very much inclined to concede everything except what we on this side of the House ask them to do? But on this question I will refer to railway property. I find from the statement of the last half-yearly reports of the different companies, that the sum of 67,283,217*l.* has been expended already in railways. Now, what is the dividend, what is the amount of money—I was going to say, what is the amount of plunder—which gentlemen who are engaged in these undertakings have to revel in? I am sure I should be very glad to meet the hon. Member for Inverness, by placing a railway under his management. I sincerely recommend him to try what he can do, and to tell us next year what he has been able to accomplish. If he can obtain a larger dividend, through having small fares and charges than large ones, I am sure he will carry more weight with Her Majesty's Government. I would willingly negotiate for him the direction of a railway, the management of which should be conducted entirely on his own principles; and then he would be able to tell the House from experience what has been the effect of low fares and charges. If he can only convince the world that a halfpenny a mile is better for all parties than a penny, he will have done good service. But, Sir, I do protest against Gentlemen coming down to this House—after we have taken the initiatory and induced the people of England to invest their money—coming down, I say, to speculate upon property, the owners of which have had a fair understanding with Parliament. I cannot but feel that such a proceeding as the granting of this Committee will be something like a breach of the agreement to which we came when former Bills were passed. Sir, I was talking of the amount of income when I was led into this disgression. There are thirty-nine railways which have been constructed at a cost of 67,000,000*l.* Of those thirty-nine, twelve pay less than 5 per cent, and fourteen between 5 and 6 per cent. I am sure that even the hon. Gentleman will not think that too large an amount. How long these poor people remained altogether without a dividend, I am not able to state. But the hon. Member, no doubt, remembers the years 1836 as well as I do. I know that at that time he took a little interest in English railways. Very likely he suffered at that unfortunate period; at all events, I never saw him afterwards. His property went down in the market, and I never saw his smiling countenance afterwards; and I'll be bound to say, that if it had been left to him to promote railways, instead of having now 3,000 miles laid down, we should not have had 300. But, under such circumstances as these, does it become the hon. Member, let me ask, to come here and propose Motions which must have the effect of depreciating the property of men who had even more difficulties to contend with than the hon. Momber himself? [*A laugh.*] Yes, there's

my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield opposite: no man has had greater difficulties to contend with than he has, though I hope to-day he has laid the foundation of a better state of things. But I was stating the dividends paid by railways. Six others than those I have named pay 8 per cent, the remaining seven from 9 to 10 per cent. This is surely no very rich field for enterprise; and therefore it is, I think, that instead of harassing us year after year with Motions — never allowing us, in point of fact, to feel our property secure when Parliament is sitting—you ought to do something to secure to us the privileges we are entitled to, and which you have held out to us a hope that we should obtain. I hope Her Majesty's Government will reconsider this question. I have voted so frequently against them this Session, that it would be quite an agreeable novelty to me to go into the same lobby with the Ministers; and I should be delighted to show the hon. Member that, until he has obtained some practical knowledge of the question, he would do well to leave Motions of this kind to abler hands. Such discussions can have no good result; and the railway interest is determined firmly to maintain their rights—rights which have been granted under successive Acts of Parliament, and which I boldly aver that it is your duty to secure.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that the question raised by his hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield was not necessarily connected with the subject brought forward by his hon. Friend the Member for Inverness. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down seemed to think that no one who supported the Motion of his hon. Friend could view the railway business of the country, as regarded the public interests, in any other light than that the profits of the railway companies had been enormous, and, to use the language of the hon. Member for Guildford, were begrudged to them. This was a mistaken view of the case. He did not believe that, taking them altogether, the profits had been enormous; but still, admitting them to be large, he did not begrudge them those profits; and, notwithstanding the lugubrious tone of the hon. Member, he hoped that he might class him with those who had obtained a due share of that wealth to which they were entitled, and which had been acquired with so much intelligence and zeal. But admitting this, still, as a Member of that House, and as one of the public, he could not help feeling that there were certain things connected with the railway business of the country, which ought and must attract the attention of the Legislature. Hon. Gentlemen said, let capital take its own way, and that any interference with the mode in which it tended to be employed ought to be avoided. This much must be allowed, that capital should be employed without the interference of the Government, for such interference, as a general rule, could be attended with nothing but mischief; but was there nothing to be regarded in this question but the employment of capital? What were the facts of the case? The conviction was growing up in the mind of every man who had watched the present system of railroads in this country, that they were approaching a state of things in which the whole internal communication of the country, including the conveyance of passengers and general traffic, would be in the hands of three or four of the principal railway companies. Every one knew what was passing in that House, as regarded the great number of amalgamations of smaller companies into the great companies. Such a state of things took this question out of the common range of questions of commercial policy. Let capital act as freely as possible, but in the present state of things with some control, which would prevent the establishment of a system which had never arisen before. He did not know why some check or some power should not be given to act on the railway companies in this country. The hon. Member for Sunderland had taunted his hon. Friend with not having brought in a Bill on this subject, instead of asking for inquiry. He thought that his hon. Friend had exercised a sound discretion in pursuing the course which he did, as the subject was one which required the greatest and the closest investigation. The hon. Member expressed a hope that there was no intention by the present Motion to break faith with the railway companies. There was nothing of the kind, for they must, under any circumstances, take care to keep faith; and he should think that they would do the greatest possible injury if they did not do so. But a Bill on this subject would be a weighty matter, even in the hands of the Government. He said such a proceeding would be a weighty matter in itself as regarded the Government, for the opposition of the railway interest would be felt; that interest was

already powerful in tliat House; and as it was so rapidly extending itself it would soon be felt with a tenfold power. He knew what would be the difficulties of the Government in proceeding with such a measure, and he knew also that delaying the subject only increased the difficulties and aggravated the evil. He therefore said that for a private Member of Parliament, like his hon. Friend, to bring forward such a measure, would be most inexpedient and objectionable. To the Motion of his hon. Friend he would give his cordial support; and he trusted that the House and the Government would give its serious attention to the subject of this inquiry, and that every exertion would be used to lead them to a safe and satisfactory conclusion. They had been told that this would be a useless inquiry, and that they should leave the settlement of the subject to the railway companies alone. What had taken place in the House that night? His hon. Friend the Member for Guildford, connected with the London and Birmingham Railroad, rose to assure the House that he was authorized to state, when a proposition was before it to extend the traffic of that company, that they thought it reasonable to propose certain terms, and to establish a low rate of fares. This by no means induced him to acquiesce in the proposition of the hon. Member for Sunderland, who stated that he thought it was the duty of Members of that House to leave railway matters alone; that they should take no notice of the fares they charged, or the means of conveyance they provided. When he saw that merely the Motion of his hon. Friend produced such a result, he thought that the House ought not to hesitate a moment in adopting inquiry. He understood his hon. Friend to say that he was empowered by the railway company of which he was a member to say what low fares they would accept.

Mr. MANGLES, in explanation, denied that he had said anything of the kind. He said that he was able to say that, in the Bill before the House to promote an amalgamation in connection with the Birmingham Railway Company, that company was prepared voluntarily to fix as a maximum the lowest scale of fares.

Mr. LABOUCHERE would say no more on that point. So much, then, with respect to the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Inverness. He now wished to say a few words as to what fell from his hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Parker). The question involved in his hon. Friend's proposition was, whether in the railway business before the House it was advisable to adopt such proceedings as would check the amount of capital to be laid out in railway undertakings in the present year. This was a grave question. It was a question which was brought before the House some time ago by the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury. He was of opinion, that if any step of such an unusual character was deemed advisable, it should be taken on the recommendation of Her Majesty's Government, which could weigh all the consequences of adopting such a course, and that in proposing it they should state the reasons to the House which induced them to advise such a proceeding. On moving at the commencement of the Session for the appointment of the general Railway Committee, the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, by what they said, raised in the minds of many men an impression that it was the intention of the Government to propose to the Committee some line of proceeding of this description, and of course that it was prepared to lay before the House the grounds for adopting such a course. His hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield had expressed his surprise that no opinion had been given by the Committee with respect to this subject, which he had supposed, after what had taken place in that House, had been brought before them. After this, he felt bound to state to the House what had taken place in the Committee of which he was a member; and in what he was about to state he was sure that he could be confirmed by the right hon. Gentleman. It was true that the Government had laid before the Committee a classification of the Railway Bills brought into the House in the present Session, and in which they had been classed as to their relative degree of importance; and he must say for himself, that when he came to examine the classification, he felt that it would be difficult for any Committee to apply themselves to this list with any considerable advantage with a view to determine which was relatively important. Besides this, he was sure that he was justified in saying that the Government had not expressed any opinion on such a measure in the Committee; and he had again and again told the Members of the Government on this Committee that if they would bring forward a Motion on the sub-

ject, with a statement of the reasons on which it was founded, he was prepared to give his best attention to the matter; and he said that he did not think that it was becoming in a Committee of the House of Commons to originate such a measure, but that the task should devolve on the Government, which should take upon itself the responsibility of such a measure. Some time afterwards he again mentioned the subject to a Member of the Government, who informed him that the Government had no intention to interfere on the subject. He therefore did not think that the Committee could be said to have abandoned the duty imposed upon them by the House—a duty which, if imposed upon them at all, it was in the speech of the right hon. Baronet; for certainly nothing of the kind was to be found in the terms of the appointment of the Committee. He still must say that he saw no use in now appointing such a Committee, at the instance of the hon. Member for Sheffield, unless the Government said that the number of Railway Bills to be passed in the present Session must be limited. To throw such a large subject on a Committee of the House of Commons, to search for evidence and proof, would be a mere waste of time. His own opinion on the question would lead him to be very careful how he sanctioned a proposition for limiting the amount of capital to be employed in any particular direction. He thought that no beneficial object would be obtained by the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the subject, on the ground of the fear of capital flowing too rapidly into any particular branch of employment. He felt most strongly that it would not be expedient for a Committee of that House to say whether or not capital should be allowed to continue to flow in any particular direction. He saw no ground for apprehension as to the effect of such employment of capital in the money market, but he feared much more the effect that might be produced in the labour market. The question was one of such importance that he thought, if undertaken at all, it should be by the Government. If the Government had made a proposition on the subject, he should have given it a fair and impartial consideration; but as they had not done so, he did not think that it should originate in a Committee of the House of Commons.

SIR G. CLERK agreed in the correctness of the description of the proceedings of the Committee appointed at the commencement of the Session on the subject of railways, just given by the right hon. Gentleman. When the Government first took up this important question, there were notices in the Board of Trade of upwards of 800 schemes of railways. He was not prepared to go as far as the right hon. Gentleman, in saying, that if they carried on all these schemes, the abstaining from limiting the amount of capital to be employed in this way for one year would not have any effect on the money market. If this enormous number of railway schemes had been proceeded with, the Government were prepared to take steps to limit the number carried forward in the present year. When, however, they came to consider the subject in Committee, they found that the number of railway schemes to be proceeded with, had been reduced to nearly one-half. They felt, that there did not then exist the same necessity for interference. This was a question of so much importance, as well as of so much nicety and delicacy, that nothing but a case of extreme necessity could justify interference. But they found that the number of railway schemes had been reduced one-half; and, as was stated by the hon. Member for Sheffield, on the authority of returns prepared by the officers of the House, the total number which would come under the notice of the House was reduced to 440; and that of these a great many Bills were merely for the purpose of amalgamation, and many more Bills had reference to the same schemes, so that a number of chances might be afforded of obtaining, if not the whole of a line, at least portions of it; and on these grounds the Select Committee did not consider it advisable to propose any limitation of the number of Bills to be submitted for the consideration of Parliament. The House would also observe in the last Report of the Committee on Railways, that the Committee said that they thought the whole of the Bills connected with England and Scotland might be proceeded with, and might be divided into sixty-one groups; and, he believed, now the number was comprised in fifty-six groups, so that the calculation of the Committee was not very far out. He thought it his duty to state in the Committee, that, under the altered circumstances of the case, the Government did not think themselves justified in making a proposition for the limited employment of capital in railway schemes for a time; and

in the propriety of adopting such a course, he thought, the Committee was unanimous. If the hon. Member for Sheffield persevered in his Motion, he should feel it to be his duty to oppose it. He was prepared, however, to give his assent to the Committee of Inquiry moved for by the hon. Member for Inverness; but in doing so he begged distinctly to be understood that he did not intend to throw any insinuations as to the intentions of those who had successfully carried out so many important railway schemes, and had embarked such a large amount of capital in such important undertakings. He believed the statement of the hon. Member for Guildford was correct; and that, on an average, railway companies would not be found to realize more than $5\frac{1}{4}$ or $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on their subscribed capital. He believed that there were not more than five railway companies that had dividends of 10 per cent on their subscribed capital, while there were a considerable number—he believed as many as ten—that were not able to pay even the dividend of 5 per cent. But at the same time it became the Legislature to consider whether they ought not to interpose at this moment; and while they secured all the advantages which the faith of Parliament was pledged to extend to railways, to see that every possible and proper advantage was procured for the public. This was a subject to which the Government had been at all times ready to give every careful consideration. In 1844, a Committee was appointed on this matter; which, after a laborious inquiry, made certain recommendations which, he believed, at first met with very general concurrence in that House; but it could not be forgotten that afterwards, when his right hon. Friend the then President of the Board of Trade brought in a Bill founded on these recommendations, having for its object the revising of the rates and charges after a period of twenty-one years, it met with very strenuous opposition in that House; and it was with the greatest difficulty that the Government could obtain the sanction of the Legislature to this proposition. Again, last year, the House introduced some farther changes; but the regulations then adopted were put in the shape of Sessional Orders, and were to be viewed rather in the light of experiments than as parts of a regular and permanent system. He thought it was therefore the more desirable that the House should now, when there were such a number of railway schemes before them, consider whether any and what further advantages may be secured to the public before these schemes were authorized. He did not now wish to go further into the other subjects touched upon by the hon. Member for Inverness. In fact, the hon. Member had himself declined entering fully into all his views, or into the details of his statement; but to several points he had merely alluded, and it was right that the hon. Member should have a full opportunity hereafter of bringing them forward in detail before the Committee. He could assure the hon. Member that he should have every opportunity afforded to him of doing so by some Members of the Government attending the Committee, in order that the fullest inquiry might take place with regard to the subject generally. The inquiry was, he thought, the more necessary, when by their rash legislation they had given almost unlimited powers to railway companies, and when they saw that almost every day further attempts were made to amalgamate competing lines, and thus to deprive the country of the benefit, such as it might be, of their competition. When they found companies that had been regarded as rivals attempting to consolidate into a smaller number of hands the extreme powers which had been entrusted to them, it did, he thought, become the duty of that House to look most minutely into all cases of amalgamation; so that, while they gave all due facilities to commerce by enabling the traffic of continuous lines to be conducted on one extensive system, they should also take care to secure the public, not only against excessive charges in future, but also such other advantages as might be provided for them. Under these circumstances, as the hon. Member (Mr. Morrison) had not felt it to be his duty to enter more into detail than he had done on this subject, he thought he would best consult the wishes of the House by also refraining from expressing more fully the views which he might entertain on the matter, more especially as he was willing to go with the hon. Member into the entire question in Committee, with an anxious desire to secure the public against the inconvenience that might arise from a great and extensive system of monopoly. He trusted, that either in consequence of the Motion brought forward by the hon. Member for Inverness or otherwise, a feeling would be created in the minds of the directors of existing railways, for extending generally to the public those advan-

tages which the hon. Member for Guildford stated the directors of the Grand Junction Railway were prepared to offer. Though he would not now trespass farther on the attention of the House, in connexion with this subject, he begged to repeat, that he considered the question to be of the greatest possible importance to the future welfare of this country.

MR. HAYTER said, his hon. Friend the Member for Inverness had made out no case for the appointment of a Committee; and he very much regretted that the Government had, in the first instance, conceded it, because by so doing they had deprived the House of the opportunity of hearing the grounds on which it was sought to be obtained. He deprecated the incessant agitation of this matter. Whatever inquiries were made, whatever acts consequent upon such inquiries were passed, still it appeared that everything done was to be of but a temporary nature, and that in the following year a new Committee was to sit on the same subject, and another Bill to be introduced altering all that had been before apparently settled. Every security given was each year to be shaken, and parties interested could never know the real ground on which they were to rest. The Act brought in by the right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade, giving power to revise the rates, and under certain circumstances to repurchase railways, was, it appeared, to be now thrown aside, and some other Bill to be introduced in its place, founded perhaps on some principle hitherto altogether unheard of. Now what were the grounds on which the hon. Member for Inverness supported his Motion? He said that the public were not sufficiently protected at present—that the railroad proprietors were making such enormous profits that some interference was necessary to keep them within bounds. [An Hon. MEMBER: No!] That certainly was one of the grounds on which the Motion for the appointment of a Committee was attempted to be justified. But fortunately that matter had been fully investigated by a Committee to whose Report allusion had been already made; and he would take the liberty of quoting a few words from the Appendix to it. Before doing so, however, he would wish to refer to a great mistake which prevailed on this subject. The capital of a railway company consisted not of one, but of two portions. The first was the amount of subscriptions paid up on shares, and the other was that which was paid up in the way of loans. The enlarged dividends were paid only on the proportion of the capital paid up on shares, and not on the loan capital; and this was a matter which it were well should be borne in mind when considering the alleged prosperity of railway companies. In the Appendix of the Report to which he referred, he found that the total amount of subscribed capital paid upon railway shares at that time was 32,500,000*l.*; the loans 14,300,000*l.* The amount of receipts in 1842 was 4,400,000*l.*, out of which there was expended in working the lines 1,900,000*l.*, leaving the net profits 2,500,000*l.*, which, after deducting $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent as the average interest on loans, would leave only 1,856,500*l.* applicable to be divided among the holders of shares, making the average dividends not more than $5\frac{3}{4}$. This, considering the risk incurred, and that a large proportion of the capital was unproductive for two or three years during the construction of the railway, must be looked upon as no very great return for the capital expended. Excess of profit, therefore, could afford no argument for the Committee sought to be obtained. But there was one point connected with this matter, by which the public were very materially benefited, but on which not one word had been said during that debate, namely, the taxation on railways, and which amounted to no less than five per cent on the gross receipts. This was a species of taxation not borne by any other property, and the amount received under it was of very considerable importance. He would take one railroad, with which he was more familiar than with any others, and he would ask the House for a moment to observe the enormous increase of taxation contributed by this railway alone for the benefit of the public. In 1839 the Great Western Railway paid 2,229*l.* in taxation to the State. In 1840, 5,440*l.*; in 1841, 10,966; in 1842, 21,814*l.*; in 1843, 25,804*l.*; and in 1844 the amount extended to no less a sum than 30,000*l.* Let it not therefore be said that the railway system in this country conferred no benefit on the country. But this was only half of the case. The amount paid by railroads to local taxation in the shape of poor rates, in the shape of county rates, and in the shape of all other rates of a local character, very nearly equalled that paid to the Government. They had, therefore, the fact of the Great Western Railway alone paying, at the end of four years

after its completion, no less a sum than 60,000*l.* annually to the expenses of the public, one half of which being in direct taxation to the Government, and the other half being spread through the various local rates of the country, and which rates must be paid by other parties unless contributed by the railway. There was this peculiarity applying to railways throughout the entire country, namely, that they paid a taxation on their profits which no other bodies were required to pay. The hon. Member for Inverness wished to introduce the French railway system into this country, but he had carefully avoided mentioning the Belgian railways. In Belgium every railway was free from all taxation, either parochial or general. In France railways were not entirely free from taxation, but they were very nearly so; they were required to pay only an amount of rates equal to that which was paid by the land before the railway was constructed, while they paid no direct, or at any rate but a very small, tax to the Government. Let the House, therefore, compare the two system, and say which was the best for the public. In France railways were granted on leases for an average period of about thirty-seven years, at the end of which time they were to become the property of the State. Now, if the 30,000*l.* paid by the Great Western Railway to the State were laid out at 4 per cent interest, the amount at the end of thirty-seven years, would be 3,201,385*l.* Therefore the State would receive in thirty-seven years an amount equivalent to three millions and upwards from that railway alone, even supposing the present taxation not to increase, while the sum contributed to local taxes would amount to an equal sum, making the entire sum contributed nearly equal to six millions sterling. But then, what was done in the French system? Would such a railway in France, at the end of thirty-seven years, be worth six millions, or anything like such a sum? When his hon. Friend contrasted the two systems, and spoke of the enormous benefits derived by the State from the course adopted in France, he had carefully avoided all allusion to the taxation paid by the English railroads, though, had he entered into that point, he would have found that their own Government derived a larger profit from railways than accrued under the French plan. But there were great evils resulting from the practice of granting terminal leases, independently of this question of taxation. It was well known that short lines of railway in connection with main lines did not pay, and that it was only from advancing the traffic on the main line that they were enabled to be undertaken. But with a short terminable lease the interest of the company becomes less year by year, and they are thus less able and willing to develop the traffic of the country by constructing these lateral lines, which they would be induced to construct if they had a perpetual interest in the concern. In fact, if they contrasted the English and French systems in any light, they would find that the plan adopted by this country was the better, and the more advantageous of the two to the State. With these impressions, and for the reasons before stated, he expressed his great regret that the Government had been prevailed upon to concede the Committee which was now sought to be obtained.

Viscount EBRINGTON said, it appeared to him that all the legislation of this country on such subjects had been hitherto founded on a wrong and fallacious basis. They had been in the habit of continually sanctioning gas works, water works, and railways under circumstances where, from the immense amount of the fixed capital embarked in the undertaking, and the small proportion of the working expenses, competition became afterwards absolutely impossible. The effect of competition in the first instance was to induce two capitalists to embark in an undertaking, when one would be sufficient to effect the object. The result was, that in all such cases an amalgamation took place in the course of time, and therefore where a monopoly was thus allowed by the Legislature, they were bound, in a due regard for the public interests, to see that proper conditions were enforced, and proper security given that the public should not ultimately suffer in the arrangement. The Reports of the Sanatory Commission, and of the Health of Towns Committee, showed the injurious tendency of the Private Bill legislation of that House in particular instances, and the absence of all wise and necessary foresight in adopting precautions against the waste and misapplication of capital, by laying down, as a preliminary step, a map of the country, as was done with respect to Ireland, in which the lines of railways that would confer the greatest amount of public advantage would be set forth, and afterwards left open to public competition. The speech of his hon. Friend who had just concluded, had failed in convincing him that the Government of this country had made better terms with

the railway companies than had been adopted in France; but it had convinced him of one point, which was, that no time was to be lost in investigating the subject, and providing, as well as they could, for the future. His hon. Friend had entered into a calculation to show that the annual tax paid by the Great Western Railway Company would amount to a greater sum than the value of the line at the termination of thirty-seven years, if the reversion were in the hands of the Government; but his hon. Friend had forgotten altogether the advantage derived by the French Government by the gratuitous transmission of mails on all the railways. One of the reasons for the diminution of the Post-office revenue was the enormous charges made by the railway companies in this country for conveying the mails; and it should not be forgotten, that in the case of the turnpike roads, which had preceded them, the trustees were precluded from demanding any charge whatever for the passage of Her Majesty's mails. He had no doubt but that if the sum paid to one of the railway companies for conveying the mails were put out to interest for thirty-seven years, it would form a considerable set-off against the sum total to which his hon. Friend had alluded. But important as this subject was from its effects on the money market, it was, he thought, still more important from its effects on the labour market. Great masses of labourers were congregated together, and left in a state of demoralization which it was fearful to contemplate. As the subject was, however, to be brought forward on a future day, he would not allude farther to it at present, except to observe that if the amount of employment afforded by railways was employed sagaciously and economically, it might have a powerful effect in raising the condition of the labourers throughout the country. Great wages were certainly paid; but they were expended in a manner so as to take the maximum amount out of the pockets of the shareholders, and place the minimum sum in the pockets of the labourers. The noble Lord concluded by saying that the House and the country were much indebted to the hon. Member for bringing the subject forward.

MR. AGLIONBY thought, that although this discussion was interesting, it was rather premature, seeing that a Committee was to be appointed which would obtain much more information than could now be given upon the statistics and the economy of railways. He would not, therefore, detain the House by entering at length upon details. It appeared to him, that when the House granted monopolies with gigantic powers, care ought to be taken that they should be to the public and for the public. He hoped, on this account, the House would grant the Committee. "Every one must see that in a few years railways would be the only means of communication in the country," was the expression of the right hon. Baronet (Sir G. Clerk); and another expression fell from him which deserved notice, namely, that more attention ought to be given than had been given hitherto to the interest and accommodation of the public. He concurred in these sentiments. It was a common saying that what was good for the public was also good for railway companies; but he thought there ought to be some controlling power over them, in order to effect this object. As to fares, without throwing blame upon any company, he was warranted in saying, there was a difference in liberality in this respect. Some companies exacted much too high fares; some reduced them to what was now considered an extremely fair rate. There could be no doubt that Parliament must interfere with the railway system; and he hoped the Committee would take it generally into their consideration, so that at a future period the House might be able to discuss the whole subject with advantage.

MR. ENTWISLE observed that much had been said in the progress of this discussion which was beside the question. He would not attempt to forestall the subjects for the investigation of the Committee, but content himself with offering a suggestion that had pressed itself upon his own mind. He entertained a strong opinion that it was in consequence of the course of legislation adopted by the House that so many railway schemes had been multiplied, and so much wild speculation created. These were the results of a want of uniformity in the decisions of Committees of that House, of a want of some good sound principles to govern their decisions by which commercial and mercantile men might be able to guide their proceedings. He, therefore, suggested that the Committee to be appointed to consider the future course of legislation should turn their attention to the adoption of some means by which uniformity of decision upon fixed principles might be secured. He hoped the Committee would also enter upon the inquiry whether some preparatory tribunal, external to that House, could not be estab-

lished, in which railway schemes might undergo a preliminary investigation. The Board of Trade had failed in this respect, owing to the manner in which it was constituted being so little in accordance with the feelings of the English people, who required an open tribunal. He did not recommend that the House should part with its jurisdiction. The jurisdiction might be retained; but every scheme that was opposed should be accompanied by the granting of costs if the decision of the preliminary tribunal was confirmed by that of the House. He would conclude by asking whether such an external tribunal would be considered as beyond the powers of the Committee when it was appointed.

MR. HUME was glad the Government agreed to the appointment of the Committee, because much valuable information would be thereby gained. All railways intended to be established ought to be made productive of the greatest amount of benefit to the community. Hitherto, to a great degree, they had been intended for the benefit of the promoters. The money paid by the promoters to prevent opposition he considered was improperly given, inasmuch as the public were saddled with this additional expense. He hoped it would be considered whether the public ought not to have more protection than they had; and whether, even as far as the interests of the proprietors were concerned, a lower rate of fares would not be more profitable and advantageous. It had been given in evidence, that by the system adopted in France, the railways there would be made capable of paying a large portion of the national debt of that country; and if the railways of this country should amount to the value of 500 or 600 millions, as was anticipated by some—if a different system had been adopted here, and the public had been guarded by previous inquiry, we might have realized a sum equal to paying a large portion of the interest of our national debt. He regretted we had not availed ourselves of such a system. He would be the last man to break faith with the railway proprietors; but he did think the House was now in a condition to consider fairly whether something better for the interests of the community could not be done than had hitherto been the case. He gave his cordial support to the appointment of the Committee; and he hoped the inquiry would be conducted with fairness, without any desire to exclude whatever information might be offered.

MR. P. M. STEWART had listened in vain to the speech of his hon. Friend (Mr. Morrison) for reasons for the appointment of a fresh Committee, at least this Session. The House could not be too cautious in exercising a watchful care over a vast interest like the railway interest; and he submitted that the present Motion ought to have emanated from the Government rather than from the hon. Member for Inverness. What was to be the object of the Committee? If he considered his hon. Friend's short speech to-night, and his ample pamphlet of the other day together, he arrived at the object of the hon. Member. In the first page of his pamphlet, he deprecated the great evils of speculation, and said that something should be devised to check it. Was the Committee then to enact something to prevent speculation in railways? His hon. Friend propounded two ways of effecting this object; but, in his pamphlet he contradicted himself on this subject over and over again, for he said that for the purpose of checking speculation, fares must be lowered. Then, in another part, he said, if fares were lowered profits would be increased. [MR. MORRISON: Where great traffic exists.] Why, all England was a great traffic. He contended that railways were well and efficiently conducted; whilst the expense of travelling was much less than it ever was before. He himself could go to his constituents, 400 miles distant, for one-third less than he could ever go before railways were constructed. His hon. Friend spoke of the cheapness of French fares; but he was sure if his hon. Friend referred again to the subject, he would find that the average fare was more in France than in England. Let them look, for example, to the London and Birmingham Railway as compared with the Paris and Rouen line. On the London and Birmingham line—let them take from London to Rugby, a distance of 84 miles, the fare for first-class passengers was 14*s.* 6*d.*; for second-class 10*s.*; and for third-class 6*s.* From Paris to Rouen, a distance of 83 miles, the fares were—first-class 16 francs, or 13*s.* 4*d.*; second-class 10*s.* 10*d.*; and third-class 8*s.* 4*d.*—giving a preference, as regarded cheapness of fares, to the English line, notwithstanding the immense expenses to which they were subject before Committees of that House; so great were those expenses, that he believed he was not beyond the mark when he said that the London and York Company, though they had not yet got their Bill, had expended half a million of money. He thought that his hon. Friend, if he

reconsidered the subject, would be inclined to return to his first love—the English system. Let them adopt what was good in the French plan; but let them not adopt all that was vicious, whilst they neglected all that was desirable. He feared that his hon. Friend did not know his own mind upon the subject, but that he realized the old maxim of an old writer—Owen Felton—of always preferring his neighbour's situation, because he saw the sunny outside of his neighbour's, and the dark interior only of his own.

Lord WORSLEY was hardly inclined to go so far as his hon. Friend (Mr. Morrison), though he certainly thought that the present system was susceptible of great improvement, and that much advantage would result from an inquiry into the whole subject. The Committees upon the merits this Session, had decided upon not entering into evidence upon the traffic. No doubt much time had been lost last year from the course which was pursued with regard to traffic; and no doubt, in many cases, the evidence of traffic had been very much exaggerated; nevertheless, he feared that if that consideration were excluded altogether, injustice in some cases might be done. He certainly could not for a moment think that there was any danger of too much money being expended at this time upon railways, for he knew that there were many difficulties in the way of their execution and practical working; for instance, he believed (and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland would contradict him if he were wrong) that no carriage builders would at present undertake to build a single carriage, except for an old-established company, so much were they at present occupied.

Sir G. GREY merely rose to express his opinion that the subject of amalgamation was one of the utmost importance. The attention of the Government had already been called to the subject; and it was admitted on all hands that there was the greatest hazard in permitting vast amalgamations, lest the object should be not so much the benefit of the public, as the establishment of enormous monopolies. He was of opinion that the Report which had been issued on the subject, should be laid before every Railway Committee of that House.

Sir R. PEEL inferred from the speech of the hon. Gentleman, that the course which he, as Chairman of a Railway Committee, would take, would be in conformity with the general principles of the pamphlet which he had written—a pamphlet which exhibited great research, and which directed the attention of the public to many points of railway legislation perhaps but little noticed before. The hon. Gentleman was evidently under the impression that great errors had been committed in the railway legislation of this country, and he would probably direct the attention of his Committee to the two following considerations—1st, whether it might not be desirable to establish some tariff of prices for passengers and goods, to which all railways seeking the intervention of Parliament should hereafter conform; and, secondly, whether it might not be desirable to adopt the French system, and to give to each railway company hereafter to be established only a qualified and temporary interest in the possession of the railway. In order to illustrate those subjects, he would probably lay before the Committee much important information connected with foreign railways. That, however, would take a considerable time to collect and to consider, and what was to become of the Railway Bills now in progress? which appeared to him to be the first subject which should occupy the attention of the Committee. Supposing there had been errors in their legislation in past years, it was quite clear that they could now correct those errors, and apply new principles to new companies seeking the intervention of Parliament; and it was possible also, where existing companies might apply to unite with others, that the privileges which they might claim under the system of amalgamation would be so great, that Parliament would have power to apply new restrictions to companies in that position; but would they suspend the legislation of the present Session till the Report of the Committee could be received upon that subject? or would they let the Bills go on, inserting in each a clause subjecting the new companies to any regulations which Parliament might hereafter adopt in consequence of the Report of the proposed Committee? If so, the subject of fares would be very important; and another important subject would be with regard to the permanent interest of the company in their railway. Could they pass a Bill giving a company a permanent interest, and yet reserve to Parliament the power of interfering to limit that interest to any precise period? It certainly was of the last importance that Parliament should be advised as to the principle on which

pending legislation was to be conducted, otherwise he feared that great difficulties would present themselves. At the same time he gave his consent to the appointment of the present Committee. One hon. Gentleman had objected that two years since they had passed a Bill which was usually looked upon as expressing the fixed opinion of Parliament with regard to railway legislation; but really railway matters had so changed, railways were making such progress, such new lights had been thrown upon the subject, and they had so much experience now from other countries, that no reflection could be thrown upon Parliament if they had two years since passed laws which were not now applicable to railway matters. Railway matters had taken so different a course from what was expected two years ago, that it was very important that Parliament, as the guardian of all Her Majesty's subjects, should have the fullest right to institute new inquiries, and to act upon the result of the information which would be thus obtained.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL said, that when the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government made, at the commencement of the Session, a statement as to the number of Bills likely to come before Parliament, and the capital which would be required to carry out the projected lines, it was to have been expected that the Government would bring forward some plan or suggestion to meet that state of things; and he (Lord John Russell) rather wished that when the Committee for which the right hon. Gentleman was appointed, some plan or some proposition should be made for that purpose. It did not appear, however, that anything more had been done by the Government than giving a general direction to the Committee how to proceed with respect to the Bills, leaving out the question of the capital. It would have been, in his opinion, a great deal better if such matters had been then considered, than to have them now discussed. What the right hon. Gentleman had stated appeared to him to be rather in the nature of a suggestion, and he could not collect from it that the Government had any intention of bringing forward any general plan. He hoped, therefore, that when this Committee should be appointed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would state his views with regard to the general subject to the Committee, with a view to ascertaining the best course of legislation on the subject.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the noble Lord had adverted to two subjects, which were in themselves very distinct. One was as to the effect which would be produced on the circulation of this country by the great amount of capital which would necessarily be required to carry out the projected lines of railway; and the other point was as to the proceedings of the Committee which had been appointed on the subject of railways. It ought to be recollected that when the Committee was appointed at the beginning of the Session, there were no less than 800 projects involving 779,000,000*l.* of capital, which were put before the public; and it would be admitted that if anything like that amount of capital was represented by the projects which were brought before the House of Commons, it would be the duty of that House to take some extraordinary measure in order to prevent any inconvenience arising to the public, and inconvenience to Parliament from dealing with such a mass of Bills. The number of those Bills had been reduced one-half, and when that reduced number came before Parliament it was found that many of them were competing lines, and thus a still greater reduction of the amount of capital to be required took place. The state of affairs, then, became essentially different from that which was presented before the appointment of the Committee at the commencement of the Session, and there was no longer apparent an urgent necessity for Parliamentary interference with private enterprise. Trusting, therefore, to the discretion of Parliament in selecting only the proper lines; and, as the immense sum which at first was named would be no longer wanted, it was thought better to adopt the general principle of not interfering with private enterprise in the outlay of capital, where such interference was not absolutely necessary. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) should be prepared to attend the Committee, and lend his assistance in developing all the facts upon which the House could form its judgment. The hon. Member's plan appeared to be founded on his views of what the hon. Member thought to be the superior advantages of the French system; but there might be a great deal said on both sides of that question, and for his part he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would go into the Committee with a desire to render every assistance in his power to the adoption of that course which might be best calculated to secure the

public against the effects of monopoly, whilst it did justice to those who had embarked their capital in such speculations.

MR. F. T. BARING suggested that a very important inquiry might be made by the Committee immediately, whether some means might not be found of reducing the immense expense to which parties were put in proving the Standing Orders, and whether by a joint Committee of both Houses the necessity of proving the same facts twice might not be obviated.

MR. HORSMAN observed, that the carrying out of amalgamations had been brought forward as a cause of the reduction of fares; but it had been shown to the House by one who was well acquainted with the subject, that so far from being an element in causing a reduction of fares, amalgamation had in some instances produced a contrary effect; and in some cases an increase of fares had been put forward as an inducement to an amalgamation. He had listened with great pleasure to the speech of the hon. Member for Renfrewshire; but that hon. Member had omitted some facts which bore very strongly on the question before them, and which were well worthy of consideration. One of the lines of railway in the south of Scotland (the Glasgow and Greenock) charged $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per mile for the first class, $1d.$ for the second class, and $\frac{1}{2}d.$ for the third class, and went at the rate of twenty-six miles an hour; and this system of low rates and speedy transit proved highly remunerative to the proprietors. The desire of the public to travel quickly was strikingly exemplified in the case of this line; for although it had a formidable competition to meet in the steam-boats on the Clyde, and although they charged higher fares than were charged in the steamers, yet the number of passengers was double the number which went by the steamers. With respect to the question which arose as to the number of railway lines projected, and the difficulty of finding capital and labour to carry them out—there were fears on that subject so long ago as 1844, when the hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Sunderland, told a Committee that he had apprehension as to what might happen within the ensuing two years. The House, however, so far from taking any precaution on that occasion, encouraged what was then called railway enterprise to such an extent, that it reduced the amount of deposit which was required to be paid from 10 per cent to 5 per cent. It would be a great misfortune if a considerable number of lines should be left incomplete, from a deficiency of labour or money to carry them out, and it would prove a very serious grievance, above all, to the proprietors of land through whose estates railway lines might pass. If they took any course which led to such results, it was quite clear that they would do that which would be an injury not only to the public, but to individual proprietors through whose lands such unfinished lines might run.

MR. WAWN said, there was an inequality which had not been noticed in respect to the competition of railways with canals. The railroad proprietors charged high rates for passengers and low rates for goods, in order to ruin the canals. This was an abuse; and if they did so with canals, might they not do the same with our coasting trade, which was the nursery of our seamen?

MR. MORRISON replied: The suggestion of the right hon. Baronet as to the adoption of a tariff, and with regard to the propriety of making certain exceptions in case an uniform tariff should be adopted, were well worthy of consideration, as well as the expediency of introducing the practice of leasing railways; and he would say, that it would have been of great public advantage if these suggestions had been considered by the House at an earlier period. What we had to complain of in this country was a want of system; and he was desirous to make an attempt to procure the adoption of a proper system. It was not his intention to reply to the observations of the hon. Members who had addressed the House on the subject of his Motion; but he felt it necessary to remark, with respect to the case of the Rouen Railroad mentioned by the hon. Member for Renfrewshire, that the Rouen tariff was established at a period when it was rather difficult for the Government to induce persons to undertake the construction of those works, and, therefore, the tariff was a very high one; whilst it was compared by the hon. Member with the Birmingham line, which was the lowest, or one of the lowest, in England. He had already said most distinctly that it was with regard to the new lines that he wished to introduce a new system. It was remarkable that the hon. Member for Sunderland, or, at any rate, some hon. Gentleman who had spoken during the debate, while approving of the principle of competition, at the same time recommended

amalgamation ; but if amalgamation were conceded by the House in the case of the many railway projects which were now under the consideration of Parliament, that concession would be fatal to competition. The subject had never been taken up properly either by individuals or the Government. It should be recollected that a railway was not a substitution of a better thing of the same class for a worse, as the substitution of a fast coach for a slow one, but the substitution of something entirely new for an old mode of conveyance. He had no regard for the French system because it was French, and he had referred to it simply because he had not the means of getting an example on so large a scale elsewhere of a low rate of fares.

Motion agreed to.

MUTINY BILL.

House in Committee on the Mutiny Bill.

Mr. S. HERBERT moved the adoption of the following Clause :—

" And whereas certain soldiers, who have heretofore been duly enlisted, and who have voluntarily taken the Oath of Allegiance and fidelity, and are now receiving Her Majesty's pay, have been sworn and attested ; but doubts have arisen whether the justices before whom the said soldiers have been so sworn and attested were duly qualified to administer to such soldiers the oaths prescribed by the several Acts passed for the punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters : be it enacted, that in every case where any such soldier, having been duly enlisted, shall have been so attested and sworn, and shall not have claimed to be discharged on or before the 17th day of March, 1846, he shall not be entitled to his discharge by reason of such informality, but shall be liable to all the provisions of this Act, and of the Act passed during the last Session of Parliament, for the punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters, where in force, and shall be entitled to the full benefit of his past service, and to all pay and pension in respect thereof, to all intents and purposes, and in like manner as if he had been duly attested and sworn."

The right hon. Gentleman remarked, that it was very difficult to say to what extent the flaw in the Act to which this clause referred applied to the army ; but there was no doubt it was very considerable. He understood that a great proportion of those who had claimed their discharge from the Grenadier Guards had expressed a wish to re-enlist ; but he found that there were flaws of the same description in the Artillery and Cavalry. He had also reason to believe that there were a great number who had not claimed their discharge who would have it in their power at any future time on being ordered to foreign service to obtain their discharge, unless some such clause as this were adopted. This informality in the attesting of recruits, there was every reason to believe, had indeed been very general—the practice having been handed down from sergeant to sergeant; he therefore hoped, that under these circumstances the House would see the necessity of adopting the clause now proposed. He begged to add that there was no intention, but the reverse, on the part of the Horse Guards, to take any advantage of the flaw in the attestations to deprive any soldier of his pension.

Mr. HUME had no objection to the principle of the clause, as he believed that it merely carried out the object of the Enlistment Act. He did not, however, like clauses which had a retrospective effect; and he would suggest, therefore, that the clause should only take effect from and after the passing of the Act.

Mr. S. HERBERT observed, that if the alteration were postponed till the Act passed, it would be an advertisement to the troops to examine their attestations, and see if they could find any flaw in them. There was also an alteration introduced into the ceremony of attestation. Were it to be left to sergeants, there would be an endless succession of such informalities as had lately occurred. Believing, however, that attestation was a necessary precaution, he proposed to continue it; but to provide that the magistrate signing the attestation should certify that the recruit had enlisted in the district over which he had jurisdiction.

Clauses brought up and agreed to, and the Bill passed through Committee.

MARINE MUTINY BILL.

On the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, to go into Committee on the Marine Mutiny Bill,

Sir C. NAPIER wished to ask, if there was any intention on the part of the Government to revise the articles of war. By the articles of war, no man had a right to be punished except by sentence of a court martial; and yet men were constantly brought up for punishment without a trial. It was true, that at the end of the articles of war, there was a clause enacting that all crimes which were not capital should be punished according to the customs of the service. He really was ashamed to read this to the men. But the whole of the articles of war wanted revising, for the punishment of death was almost the only

one inflicted by them. Take as an instance the sleeping of a man on his watch, which was punishable by death; why, it was a notorious fact, that the men came on deck to sleep, and yet they were liable to suffer death for it. It was proper now, in a time of peace, to revise these articles of war, and humanise them a little; and if the Government did not take up the matter, he should think it his duty to do so.

MR. CORRY said, that there was no intention on the part of the Government to alter the articles of war. It was a subject which required to be treated with great delicacy.

MR. HUME complained that this was a very unsatisfactory answer.

MR. CORRY moved the following cla se :—

"And whereas certain marines who have heretofore been duly enlisted, and who have voluntarily taken the Oath of Allegiance and fidelity, and are now receiving Her Majesty's pay, have been sworn and attested; but doubts have arisen whether the justices before whom the said marines have been so sworn and attested, were duly qualified to administer to such marines the oaths prescribed by the several Acts passed for the regulation of Her Majesty's Royal Marine Forces while on shore: be it enacted, that in every case where any such marine, having been duly enlisted, shalt have been so attested and sworn, and shall nol have claimed to be discharged from Her Majesty's Royal Marine Forces on or before the 17th day of March, 1846, he shall not be entitled to his discharge by reason of such informality, but shall be liable to all the provisions of this Act and of the Act passed in the last Session of Parliament for the regulation of Her Majesty's Royal Marine Forces while on shore, where in force, and shall be entitled to the full benefit of his past service, and to all pay and pension in respect thereof, to all intents and purposes, and in like manner as if he had been duly attested and sworn."

MR. HUME said, that unless some assurance was given that the question of the articles of war would be taken into consideration, he should move that the Chairman report progress.

SIR G. COCKBURN said, although the punishment of death was generally inflicted, yet every article contained the proviso that any such other punishment might be awarded as the custom of the service directed; and it was usual in the case of minor crimes for the captains to deal with them, and inflict such minor punishment as accorded with the nature and degree of the offence. If the offence was of a grave description, then a court martial decided on the punishment.

SIR C. NAPIER had never, during the whole time he had been in the service, heard of a man who was about to be punished and asked for a court martial, who got it. It was generally thought a very impertinent thing, and he got a heavier punishment for it. It would be easy to insert in the articles of war specific punishments for some offences, and leave others to be dealt with by courts martial and the custom of the service. He thought it was high time for the Admiralty to take the thing seriously up, and adopt some stringent steps to show that desertion was a crime. He saw men pass his house every day whom he knew to be deserters. The fact was, there was no proper system adopted for retaking deserters.

SIR G. COCKBURN said, there was no fault with the Admiralty; for those deserters who had been retaken had been tried by court martial and severely punished.

SIR C. NAPIER said, the punishments were too severe to have the proper effect; and if something was not done to remedy the evil, he should feel it his duty to bring the subject before the House, though he thought it would be much better dealt with by the Admiralty.

CAPTAIN LAYARD objected to the power which a captain in the navy possessed of ordering a man a dozen lashes, without being tried by a court martial. There was this anomaly in the navy, that if a man had sold his necessaries he might be punished; but if he deserted and sold his necessaries he could not.

SIR G. COCKBURN contended that the power of punishment vested in the captain, was absolutely necessary for the good order of the service. He objected to Gentlemen who knew nothing of the naval profession getting up and stating that this thing or the other ought to be done; he had much rather discuss the matter with an experienced naval officer like the gallant Member opposite.

SIR C. NAPIER said, this was a question which the Government would be compelled to take up before long; and they could not have a better opportunity than the present, when there was no excitement on the subject.

CAPTAIN LAYARD said, he had just been informed that a captain in the navy could order a man four dozen lashes without the sentence of a court martial; and he thought that much too extensive a power to be vested in any one.

Clause agreed to.

Bill passed through Committee.

House adjourned at half-past Eleven.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, March 20, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª. Fever (Ireland); Insolvent Debtors (India); Consolidated Fund.
2ª. Print Works.
Reported. Metropolitan Buildings.
PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Lord Stanley, from Landowners and others of Kingsbury, and several other places, for Protection of the Agricultural Interest.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Landowners, Tenants, and Labourers, of the Parishes of Camerton and Radstock, in favour of the Corn Laws.—From Charles Green, of Liverpool, complaining of the Inefficiency of a Commissioner appointed to the Court of Requests there, and praying for Relief.—By Lord Brougham, from Landowners and others of the Town of Penrith, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Lord Stanley, from the Bishops and Beneficed Clergy of the Diocese of Kilmore, praying that the Sums paid for the Poor Rate may be deducted from the Gross Value of their Benefices, for the Purpose of computing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners Tax.

IRISH POOR LAW—PRIVILEGE.

The EARL of CLANCARTY said, that in consequence of what had passed yesterday evening in their Lordships' House, with regard to the examination of a witness before the Committee on the Irish Poor Law, the Committee had again examined him, and had come to the opinion that the date of the document in question was anterior to the sitting of the Committee, and that the citation to Mr. Gulson was to produce it *suo motu*, and not by order of the Committee. This was the substance of what had passed before the Committee to-day, and he should not go any further into the matter.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that the statement of the noble Lord was satisfactory as far as it went, because it showed that there was not a requisition by the Committee, and a refusal to comply with it by the witness. He quite disagreed in what had been said yesterday of the irregularity of the discussion, for the noble Earl had been asked, as Chairman of the Committee, as to a matter which had taken place before them. There was nothing irregular in this, if their Lordships were to have any privileges.

The EARL of CLANCARTY admitted that he ought not to have used the term "irregular." He did not mean it in the sense given to it by the noble and learned Lord, whom he would be the last person in that House to charge with being irregular.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, he was justified in yesterday withholding any opinion condemnatory of the Poor Law Commissioners, by what he had since learned. Mr. Gulson wrote to the Poor Law Commissioners on the 12th of February, asking their permission to make use of certain documents on being examined before their Lordships' Committee, he being then totally ignorant whether those documents would or would not be called for, and desiring to have them, for the purpose of enabling him to make his statement before the Committee fair, clear, and satisfactory. The answer he received did not for a moment suggest that the Commissioners would withhold any information whatever, either oral or written, that their Lordships' Committee or either Houses of Parliament might require; but contained this statement, that they (the Commissioners) did not conceive, without further communication on the subject, that those documents should be voluntarily produced. There had, therefore, been no refusal on the part of the Commissioners to grant the required Papers, and no obstruction to the proceedings of that House. The matter was one certainly which called for the instantaneous interference of the House; but, on seeing that no obstruction had been intended, and no refusal made to any request of their Lordships, he conceived they were bound as rapidly and as decidedly to free the parties from imputation — the Poor Law Commissioners as well as Mr. Gulson.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that the best way to decide the question was, by producing the letter of Mr. Gulson and the Commissioners' answer.

The EARL of CLARE said, he believed there was not the slightest intention on the part of the Poor Law Commissioners to withhold any Papers or information from their Lordships' Committee.

LONDON AND YORK RAILWAY BILL.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE said, that the petitions of Mr. George Pryme, of Cambridge, and Mr. James Tyler, of 15, Holloway-place, Islington, which he had presented on the previous day, praying to be heard by counsel against this Bill, had been put into his hand on Monday last; but owing to his not having been acquainted with the Standing Orders on this subject, which were entirely novel to him, he overheld those petitions, instead of laying them on the Table of their Lordships' House, three days after which they could have gone regularly before the Standing Orders Committee. The whole blame rested with him; and that being the case, the parties themselves having done

all that it was in their power to do, he hoped their Lordships would allow them to be heard before the Standing Orders Committee, which, if he had laid their petitions on the Table of the House the day, or even the day after, he received it, they would have been entitled to. He therefore begged leave to postpone the Motion of which he had given notice, for a Select Committee to inquire and report upon those two petitions, and to move that they be referred to the Standing Orders Committee on the Bill, and that leave be given to the petitioners to be heard againt it.

LORD BEAUMONT thought the course proposed by the noble Marquess was quite irregular. Such petitions should be three clear days on their Lordships' Table before they were sent to the Committee; and he saw no reason for giving an advantage to the petitioners in this case which was refused to others.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, that the other House of Parliament, where a party had done all that depended on them to do, and that the Member to whom they forwarded their petition, through absence or some other cause, failed to present that petition in due time, had uniformly extended the period not only in courtesy to one of its own Members, but in justice to the case itself. It would undoubtedly be a great hardship on parties who had done all that was necessary, if they were to be damnified by an accidental circumstance, or by neglect on the part of the Member of Parliament in not presenting the petition. If there were neglect on the part of the agents or the parties themselves, the case would be altered; but after the statement of the noble Marquess, he did not think their Lordships could refuse to grant his Motion.

EARL GREY had no objection to the Motion. He thought those parties ought to be heard, in order that the question which they sought to raise should be settled, viz., whether the contract deed now before Parliament was a good and valid instrument, and whether the Bill had been regularly introduced. He did not think any injury could accrue to the promoters of the Bill from having such questions mooted.

LORD CAMPBELL was also of opinion, that, as not a shadow of blame could be attributed to the parties themselves, the right course to pursue would be that pointed out by the noble Marquess.

The EARL of SHAFTESBURY was understood to suggest that if the noble Marquess allowed the question to stand over until Monday, he could then bring it regularly before the House.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE consented.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, March 20, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1°· Legal Quays (London).
2°· Turnpike Roads (Scotland).
Reported. Mutiny; Marine Mutiny.
3 and passed. Consolidated Fund (£8,000,000).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Cobden, from various places, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Handloom Weavers, for a Regulation of their Trade.—From George Alfred Walker, of No. 101, Drury Lane, for Sanatory Regulations.—By Mr. John O'Brien, from City of Limerick, for Improvement of Limerick Harbour.—By Mr. Thomas Duncombe, from Members of a Temperance Society, Oxford Market, against Enrolment of Militia.—By Mr. Wawn, from Members of the Shipowners' Society of South Shields, for Regulating Charges on Railways.—By Lord John Manners, from Trustees of the Savings' Bank at Newark-upon-Trent, for Alteration of Savings' Banks Act.—By Mr. Home Drummond, from the Trustees on the Lochlong, Helensburgh, and Luss Districts of Turnpike Roads, for Alteration of the Turnpike Roads (Scotland) Bill.—By Captain Gordon, from the Presbyteries of Ellon and Kincardine O'Neill, in favour of Turnpike Roads (Scotland) Bill.

THE CASE OF JOSEPH MASON.

MR. REDHEAD YORKE, in pursuance of the Notice he had given, begged leave to ask the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he could give any specific information in respect to the return to England of Joseph Mason, who was sentenced to twenty years' transportation at the York March Assizes, in 1843, upon a conviction which turned out to have been given in error, and which was established so to have been given in December, 1845?

SIR JAMES GRAHAM, in reply, said, that the statement to which the hon. Gentleman had alluded had been made soon after the trial of Joseph Mason had taken place, upon the ground of the verdict having been erroneous. When that representation had been made at the Home Office, he had at once consulted with the learned Judge before whom the prisoner had been tried, and with his counsel. Information was given to him (Sir J. Graham) that an alibi could be satisfactorily established; but he thought that it would be contrary to the practice of the Home Office to enter into such an *ex parte* inquiry in that office, after a trial in open court. He, however, caused a strict inquiry to be

instituted into the allegations relating to the alibi; and the consequence of that inquiry was, that circumstances appeared so strongly in favour of its truth, that he caused the whole information to be laid before the learned Judge, Mr. Justice Coltman, who recommended that a free pardon should be granted. A free pardon had been transmitted accordingly to the Colony in the latter end of the year 1845, and there had been no opportunity since of receiving an answer. He should observe, that in addition to the free pardon, an order had been sent out that all the expenses which Mason might have incurred in consequence of the proceedings, together with the cost of his return, should be defrayed by the Government.

NATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Mr. WYSE wished to put three questions to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, of which he had given notice. The first had reference to a very important measure, which formed a principal feature of the Bill he had introduced in 1831, and had subsequently been strongly recommended in the Report of the Committee on Education in 1838. He meant the incorporation of the Board of National Education, as an indispensable means to enable the Board to exercise its functions with proper effect, by empowering it to take land and build schools in districts which, from poverty and other circumstances, might otherwise be deprived of them; and farther to improve and extend generally the advantages of education. He understood from the right hon. Baronet, in the course of the last Session, that that desirable object would be immediately and fully carried into effect. His second question was directed to an subject of hardly less moment—the efficient provision for a higher scale of elementary education, immediately above the ordinary elementary school; and this also had been guaranteed by the Government during the last Session, by a promise to establish forthwith, through the intervention of the Board of Education, thirty-two model schools, distributed through the several counties of Ireland. The object to which his third question had relation was, especially under the present and future circumstances of Ireland, in no wise inferior in its influence on the social and moral character of the people, or of less consequence than either of the others: he referred to the establishment and encouragement of agricultural schools and colleges. He wished to see not only such institutions founded by the Board, but also encouraged by grants and advice, whenever they deserved it by their management, and benefits, though originating from individuals. He knew of more than one which might on such grounds fairly claim assistance from the Government and Legislature. He need not go farther than an institution at Esker, in Galway, an agricultural college, founded by the very rev. Dr. Smyth, head of the Dominicans, whom to mention was to praise for his intelligent zeal and benevolence, and who stated in a letter that he was actively engaged at that moment in the laudable undertaking, employing not less than one hundred persons in draining and reclaiming the neighbouring bogs and morasses, and coming forward like a true Christian clergyman with his own exertions and funds—an example to all others, lay or clerical—to meet the present distress, and to check the threatened calamity of disease in his neighbourhood. Thinking that such efforts, for every reason, merited aid and countenance from every Government, to say nothing of their ulterior influence on agricultural skill and knowledge, and on the moral and religious character and conduct of the people, he did wish, he confessed, to ascertain how far the Government had anticipated, or were willing to follow out, his suggestion. He would, therefore, without further preamble, ask the right hon. Baronet the three questions referred to, in the words in which they stood on the Paper:—1. Whether the incorporation of the Board of National Education in Ireland, promised to be granted by the Government during the last Session, had been yet carried into effect?—2. Whether any measures, and what, had been taken to establish the thirty-two model schools promised to be established by the Government in the course of the last Session?—3. Had any measures, and what, been taken by the Board of National Education, or by any branch of the Government, to establish, maintain, assist, or otherwise promote, agricultural schools or colleges, in Ireland?

Sir JAMES GRAHAM, in reply to the first question, stated that he had the satisfaction of being enabled to inform the hon. Gentleman and the House, that the charter of incorporation for the Board of National Education in Ireland had been issued on the 7th of August last; and as

the absence of that act of incorporation was the only obstacle which had existed to prevent the establishment of the thirty-two model schools alluded to by the hon. Member for Waterford, and to which his second question referred, he believed that that would be a sufficient answer to that question. As soon as he received the Report upon the subject, he would lay it upon the Table. As to the third question, he assured the right hon. Member that the important subject had not escaped the attention of Government.

THE OREGON TERRITORY.

On the Motion, that the Order of the Day for the further consideration of the Customs and Corn Importation Report be read,

MR. BORTHWICK rose, in pursuance of the notice he had given, to propose a question to the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government; and he trusted the House would, in consideration of the very great importance of the subject, allow him to make a few observations in explanation of the nature of the question he intended to put. At the beginning of the present Session of Parliament Her Majesty was graciously pleased, from the Throne, to express her regret,

"That the conflicting claims of Great Britain and the United States, in respect to the territory on the North-western coast of America, although they had been made the subject of repeated negotiation, still remained unsettled."

And the Queen added—

"That it was Her Majesty's purpose to continue all such efforts as might be consistent with national honour to bring the question to an early and peaceful termination."

It was impossible to select words more worthy of a powerful Sovereign when addressing Her Parliament, or more worthy of the Parliament of the great country to whom those words were addressed, than those he had just read to the House. The House cordially and entirely sympathized with the Government, both in the announcement of the fact, and in the measures which they were prepared to take for effecting a peaceable termination of this question. Up to this moment, the House and the country had yielded to Her Majesty's Government a silent but entire confidence in carrying out these measures. It was not his purpose to disturb that silence, or to intimate in the slightest degree a diminution of that confidence; but it was impossible to conceal the fact that although the House had appreciated and fully understood the spirit in which Her Majesty's Government had been acting, yet on the other side of the Atlantic there did exist a misguided and ignorant party which had put upon the words used by Her Majesty, and the subsequent proceedings of the Government in that House, and also upon what had occurred elsewhere, a construction the very opposite to that which those words and proceedings were intended to bear. There were those who thought that the absence of bluster and bravado indicated the presence of timidity and fear. Such was the construction which had been put upon the words of Her Majesty's speech from the Throne, and the subsequent proceedings of Her Government, by those who were called the war party in America. It was certainly true that words had been used in the course of a recent debate, which rather tended, than otherwise, to confirm the interpretation to which he had referred, It was, therefore, time that England should distinctly make known to the war party in America, as it was known to all the world already, except to that party, that while England was ready to make every such effort for the maintenance of peace, as was consistent with her honour and her rights, yet she only deprecated war in this instance, inasmuch as any war in which this country was engaged could not but seriously interfere with the progress of human civilization; and that it was in this respect and in no other that this country and the House deprecated a war with the United States. It was high time, in his opinion, that some such expression of feeling on behalf of Her Majesty's Government should be distinctly made in the House of Commons. It would do more than any diplomatic negotiation towards the maintenance of that peace, so desirable to be maintained, between this country and America. He had preferred asking a question to making a Motion, because he thought it was not a subject calculated for discussion in a public assembly like that; and because he entertained a hope, from what had occurred elsewhere, that the right hon. Gentleman would grant the Papers without any Motion; he should therefore simply ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it were the intention of Her Majesty's Government to present to this House copies or extracts of any correspondence which may have passed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Her Majesty's Minis-

ter at Washington, in relation to the Oregon Territory.

SIR R. PEEL: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it necessary to make any observation on the general subject to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. I think any explanation to be wholly unnecessary, because I am perfectly convinced that the expressions used by Her Majesty in Her gracious Speech from the Throne, and the expressions used by public men in this House and elsewhere, of either political party, have not been misconstrued in the United States. I do not think that there would be any public advantage, in the present state of the differences existing between this country and the United States as to the Oregon territory, in making any communication to this House; and it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to make any such communication. At the same time the Executive Government of the United States, having a distinct proposition to make to the other branches of the Legislature of that country, have made a communication to the Legislature, containing certain notes that have passed between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Pakenham. And although I should not have thought it necessary to lay those documents before this House, still as they have been made public, it may be thought necessary by the House, for the sake of authenticating those documents, that they should be produced; I therefore shall have no objection to lay these communications, to which publicity has already been given, before the House. We have no proposition to make to the Legislature on the part of Her Majesty's Government concerning the present questions pending between the United States and this country, the negotiations about which have not yet been brought to a conclusion. It is quite unusual to lay official despatches before the House, or to make communications respecting negotiations that have not been brought to a conclusion. But, certainly, since those communications have been made public, it may be right for this House to ascertain whether they are authentic or not; and although Her Majesty's Government do not intend, of their own Motion, to lay them before the House, yet, if the House itself wishes that they should be produced, I am ready to comply with that wish.

LORD J. RUSSELL: I wish to state, so far as I am concerned, I have no wish to ask for any Papers until the right hon. Gentleman can state that the negotiations have reached such a point, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, as to induce him to think that the time is arrived when the Papers relating to those negotiations should be laid before the House. If the right hon. Gentleman withholds these Papers, I can only say that I shall not press nor ask for them until the whole negotiations shall have been completed, and until then I shall give no opinion upon the subject.

THE CORN LAW.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: I wish, on this occasion to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question with respect to the course to be pursued with the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Law. Eight weeks have now elapsed since Her Majesty made Her Gracious Speech from the Throne. The right hon. Gentleman, after making his first statement of the measure he intended to bring forward, allowed a fortnight for its consideration, before any discussion of it was called for. Three weeks were then engaged in a preliminary discussion; and after that the Bill was introduced. It does seem to me, therefore, that after so much discussion, the right hon. Gentleman would be perfectly justified in doing that which he declared it was his intention to do, namely, to go on with the discussion of that Bill, from day to day, until the measure should be brought to a close. I should have thought it unnecessary to mention this, had it not been that another right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, stated, in answer to a question put to him the other evening, that it was his intention, on the first day after the second reading of the Corn Bill, to propose the first reading of the Bill for the Protection of Life in Ireland. Now, I could very well understand how, if it was thought that the Corn Bill was of such urgency that all other measures should be postponed to it, that the right hon. Gentleman should have postponed this measure relating to Ireland, and have gone on with the Corn Bill until it was finally disposed of. But such I do not understand to be the intention of the right hon. Gentleman; and such being the case, I think the passing of that Bill will not be hastened a single day by the postponement of the Bill for altering the Corn Law. And on other grounds, I think there will be great inconvenience from longer delaying this measure. If the third reading of the Corn Bill have to be postponed for the first reading of the Irish Bill, that third reading might have

taken place during the time that the first reading of the Irish Bill would otherwise take up; and the effect will only be further to delay the second reading of the Irish Bill; so that no time will be gained in the passing of that Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department attaches great importance. I wish therefore to express my hope that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will adhere to the regulation which he stated he should adopt. Certainly I do not complain, with reference either to the promoters of the measure, or those who oppose it, of any delay that has taken place. But I think there has been so full and sufficient a discussion of the measure, as to call upon the right hon. Gentleman, without any risk of being charged with hastening on the measure with undue precipitancy to proceed at once from the second reading to the Committee on the Bill.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I can assure the noble Lord that I never felt greater anxiety with regard to the progress of a measure, than I do with regard to the progress of the Corn Bill. I have received communications from many parts of the country, from those even who are adverse to the policy of Her Majesty's Government, earnestly desiring that some decision on the Corn Bill should be come to. In the first place, there are many who feel that, on account of the state of the crop in this country, there would be the greatest advantage in having free access to that corn which is now in bond, in order that it may be mixed with the corn of this country which is not in a state for making the finest flour. And on that account, on account of the peculiar state of our harvest, there is especial inconvenience in delaying the decision of Parliament with regard to the duties which shall attach to foreign corn; because it is quite clear that, in the expectation that foreign corn will be admitted at a duty of 4*s*. instead of 18*s*. that no foreign corn will be taken out of bond. That has a most material effect upon the demand for our own domestic produce; and, in point of fact, for some weeks past, there has been less corn sold in those towns, the markets of which determine the average that regulate duty, than has been the case, I believe, at any former period. Independently of these considerations it must be borne in mind that the Resolutions respecting all the Customs Duties having been reported to this House, the Treasury has, in conformity with the established usage, directed the Customs to permit all articles included in the Tariff to be admitted at the new rate of duty. Consequently, at the present period, all the articles which compete with the great manufactures of this country are now admitted at a low duty. A bond having been taken from the parties that they will abide the ultimate decision of Parliament, with reference to these duties—all foreign articles of manufacture connected with the linen, with the woollen, and with the cotton manufactures—all foreign articles, almost without exception, are admitted under that Treasury order at a duty of ten per cent; and many articles connected with agriculture—all cattle, for instance—are, under that Treasury order, admitted duty free. That constitutes another very urgent reason why the decision of Parliament with regard to the Corn Laws should be pronounced at as early a period as possible. If it is pronounced at an early period, of course there will be no difficulty in enforcing the bond that has been given to pay the higher duties. But, the longer the time that elapses between this freedom from duty, or this reduction of duty, and that period when, if higher duties be demanded, they must be required from the parties, the greater will be the embarrassment caused, and the greater will be the difficulty of enforcing the payment of these higher duties. On those grounds, I am certainly most anxious that we should proceed with all expedition consistent with due deliberation on the Corn Laws; and it certainly it is my intention, so far as the measures of Government are concerned, to postpone every question which can possibly be postponed, which might interfere with the progrees of the Corn Bill. But, then, we are in this position with respect to a Bill of very great importance which has been sent down from the other House—a Bill, the introduction of which nothing could justify but an urgent necessity, in the opinion of Her Majesty,s Government, that some extraordinary law should at once be passed. If we took no step whatever with regard to this Bill—and I apprehend it is not impossible even for us not to read this Bill a first time till after the Corn Bill has been disposed of—but I confess it would be a very unusual proceeding, when a Bill has been sent down to us from the other House, to postpone all proceedings on it whatever for some weeks. I am, therefore, compelled to take this course;

but I take it with considerable reluctance. I propose—adhering to the arrangement that was made on another night—I propose to take the second reading of the Corn Bill on Monday next. After the second reading of the Corn Bill, I think it would be right that the House should have the opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the first reading of the Bill for the Prevention of the crime of Assassination in Ireland. But I should not propose that any other stage of that Bill should interfere with the progress of the Corn Bill. I should propose, therefore, to fix the first reading of the Bill for the Prevention of Assassination on Friday next. It is possible the debate on the second reading of the Corn Bill may terminate on Thursday; but if it should not—if the anticipation of my noble Friend, that the debate will proceed till Friday, and then terminate, should be realized—in that case, I should propose, certainly, that the continued debate on the Corn Bill should have precedence over the first reading of the Irish Bill; and it would be necessary, in that case, to fix the first reading of the Irish Bill for the Monday following. But as it is possible that the debate on the Corn Bill may terminate on Thursday, I will now fix it for Friday, with the distinct understanding that the first reading of the Irish Bill shall not interfere with the second reading of the Corn Bill, though I think it possible that that debate may not terminate till Friday night. As I have stated, I yield the precedence to the first reading of this Bill with great reluctance; because I am convinced that it is of very great importance to all parties—I do not say that the Bill should pass, but that the ultimate decision of the House upon the subject should be known. We all know that trade is affected to the utmost extent by the uncertainty that prevails. I should have thought it contrary to all usage, and of course inconsistent with the great importance of the subject, to have adopted any other plan; and I have suggested that course which appeared to me, upon the whole, to be most consistent with the public interest.

METROPOLITAN TERMINI OF RAILWAYS.

Sir R. PEEL: May I be allowed to add a few words on another subject? I said yesterday, that I would to-day give notice of the course which will be taken on Monday with regard to the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for North Lancashire (Mr. W. Patten), as to those railway termini which it is proposed to place either within the metropolis or immediately adjoining it. I find that the debate has been adjourned until Monday, and therefore there is some difficulty in my giving any notice on the part of Her Majesty's Government; but it will probably suffice if I state that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to act on the recommendation of the Committee of which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. Patten) is the chairman; and on Monday next, on the resumption of the debate, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to acquiesce in that Motion, and to advise Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission for the purpose of considering that important question—namely, the manner in which those railway projects having their termini in the metropolis shall be dealt with.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

The Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Question that the House do agree with the Committee on the Resolution respecting Timber, being read,

The Marquess of WORCESTER spoke as follows: I will not trouble the House long, but I am desirous of stating the reasons which compel me to oppose the present Resolution. I am anxious to accept the challenge thrown out by the right hon. Gentleman the other evening, whether the interests of the producer, as well as those of the consumer, have or have not been benefited by the reduced duties of the Tariff. Now, for this purpose, I will take the first four years immediately preceding the late Tariff, and the four years which have passed since that time, and I find that in the years 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1841, according to *Prince's Price Current*, which, I believe, is considered in these matters as good an authority as the *Gazette*, that the average price of timber was 5*l.* 11*s.* I will pass by the year of the Tariff, for that was naturally a year of great stagnation and uncertainty, but in that year the price was 5*l.* 5*s.* I then come to the years 1843, 1844, 1845, and 1846, and I find that in January last the price had fallen to 4*l.* 18*s.* 4½*d.* being a difference and deficiency of 12*s.* 7½*d.* Another reason why these reduced duties must injure the producer of timber is to be derived from the free importations now permitted, of tan leather. In consequence of the increased importation of that article, the demand for

bark decreases, and a serious injury is in that indirect way inflicted upon the timber trade. But, in my opinion, it is the duty of the House to look not only to the home but to the colonial producer; and I invite its attention, while I briefly state the recent changes which have been made in the differential duties between colonial and foreign timber. Previously to the Tariff of 1842, the duty upon Baltic timber was 55*s.*, and the cost of conveyance was 55*s.* also. The duty upon the timber of Canada was 10*s.*, and so there was at that time a differential duty of no less than 45*s.* in favour of the colonial producer. But in the year 1842 the duty upon Baltic timber was reduced from 55*s.* to 30*s.*, and in 1843 there was another reduction to 25*s.* The Canadian timber was also reduced from 10*s.* to 1*s.*, and consequently there was left only a protective duty of 24*s.* It is now proposed to reduce the duty upon foreign timber from 25*s.* to 20*s.*, and that in 1847 there shall be a still further reduction to 15*s.* So there will only be a protective duty of 14*s.* I trust also that the House will not forget that the carrying trade of Canadian timber is almost entirely in the hands of British merchants, and that it almost exclusively employs British seamen; and that, on the other hand, at least five-sixths of the Baltic timber trade is carried on by Prussians, Russians, Danes, Swedes, by all the nations which lie upon the Baltic. I believe it is calculated that in the Baltic timber trade there are employed 32,900 seamen, and of that amount the number of Englishmen is only 6,505. Are we then, I ask, to legislate for the benefit of the Prussians and the Swedes, for the benefit of the nations that lie upon the Baltic, or for the benefit of Englishmen? And how are the shipowners of Great Britain to contend against such odds as these? The hon. Member for Wolverhampton said, the other evening, that, if any foreigners were to come into this House, they would be astonished at the course pursued by the Gentlemen who occupy these benches; but I say that if any foreigners were to come here, they would be more astonished at the course pursued by Her Majesty's Ministers in protecting foreign consumers, and in levying heavy taxes on their own countrymen. The course pursued by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and the hon. Member for Stockport, has been true, and firm, and honest—consistent with the feelings they have expressed for years; but I confess I do not understand the course of Her Majesty's Government. I cannot understand a change which suddenly occurs during winter time. I do not see any reason why Her Majesty's Ministers should have reduced these duties, when the price of timber is now lower than it was last year; and seeing no reason for the reduction, but, on the contrary, believing that the reduction will operate most injuriously towards the interests of this country, I beg to move that "the words of the present Resolution be omitted."

MR. SPEAKER said, the question before the House, is whether the House will agree to the proposed Resolution. If the noble Lord intends to oppose the Resolution, his proper course will be simply to negative the Resolution.

The MARQUESS of WORCESTER: I beg, then, to state, that I shall give a most decided negative to the present Resolution.

MR. H. HINDE certainly had expected that, after the noble Lord had stated his objections to the course of the Government, some Member of the Treasury bench would have risen to explain the reasons which induced the Government to propose so great an alteration in the duties on timber. It could hardly be that they underrated its importance, or that, having established the general principles of free trade, they felt that they could not omit this particular article. He would rather have postponed the remarks he wished to make until after the explanation of the Minister had been given; but he did not wish the House to go to a division without stating the grounds upon which he intended to oppose the Resolution. He had had the misfortune to differ from the Government in all the reductions they had made. He believed that the scheme of the Government, though it might be well-intentioned, would prove a futile attempt to promote the general welfare by inflicting an injury upon every interest in detail. Her Majesty's Government prided themselves upon being supported in this Resolution by the shipowners of the country; but he really did not see why such weight should be attached to the opinion of those shipowners, when upon a former occasion they had petitioned the House to an exactly opposite effect. It might perhaps be, that change of opinion without cause assigned found favour with Her Majesty's Government. A fellow-feeling made men wondrous kind; and a close sympathy might exist between a changeable Government and the changeable petitioners. He did not dispute the respec-

tability of the shipowners who had signed the petitions in favour of this Resolution; but the House was under a very wrong impression if they supposed that the petitioners represented the general feeling of the whole body of shipowners. He did not presume himself to say what was the feeling of the whole body of shipowners; but this he did say, that those who had petitioned in favour of the reduction of duties formed a very small part of the entire shipping interest. The Government, however, were labouring under a great error if they supposed that these petitioners had become disciples of free trade. It was no such thing. They considered themselves as the first victims of free trade; they had for years suffered from its effects; and they had not obtained the sympathy of their fellow countrymen. They, therefore, had felt the not unnatural desire that others should be treated in the same manner as that in which they had been treated. He would refer to two passages from the petition presented the other night with great pomp by the right hon. Baronet from the shipowners of Sunderland. The right hon. Baronet would have exercised a sounder discretion if he had not moved that the petition be printed; for though its prayer was in his favour, its reasoning was against him. The petition stated that since the reciprocity treaties they had been unprotected; and that, therefore, they did not think themselves called upon to support protection to others. They did not deny that protection to some interests was necessary; but they felt the not unnatural desire to retaliate upon others for the treatment they had themselves received. The change, in the opinion of these petitioners, had been more recent even than that of the right hon. Gentleman; for he was convinced that last January every one of them would have signed a petition with an opposite prayer. The right hon. Baronet had laid upon the Table certain Returns to show that the prosperity of the shipping interest had been increased by the Tariff of 1842; but never had Papers more wofully disappointed the object of their producer. He would not trouble the House with any other figures than those taken from the Papers of the right hon. Baronet himself. He would take a series of years, both before and after the Tariff, and show the effect which the Tariff had had upon the prosperity of the timber trade. First, with regard to British tonnage, his figures would show that instead of an increase caused by the operation of the Tariff, the previous regular progressive increase had fallen off since 1842. In the two years preceding 1842, the increase of British shipping had been 621,881 tons, or at the rate of 21½ per cent per annum. But, in 1843, the shipping amounted to 3,619,000 tons; and in 1844, to 3,637,000 tons; the increase having only been 17,381 tons, or 1½ per cent. Thus, the remarkable fact was, that whereas for the two years preceding the alteration in the Tariff the rate of increase in our shipping had been 21½ per cent; for the two years following that alteration, the rate of increase had only been 1½ per cent. He would now call attention to the Returns of entries inwards and outwards, of British and foreign vessels, engaged in our foreign and colonial trade, in 1832 and 1845, which were as follows:—

		TONS.
1832	British vessels entered inwards	1,936,846
——	Foreign	561,047
1845	British	3,669,853
——	Foreign	1,353,739

It hence appeared that the British tonnage inwards had increased during this period, 1,733,000 tons; while the foreign tonnage had advanced by 791,688 tons. The increase in the British shipping thus had been only at the rate of 90 per cent; while the increase in the foreign shipping had been at the rate of 140 per cent. In 1838 the British tonnage was to the foreign as 3½ to 1; in 1845 it was, as compared with the foreign only, as less than 2 to 1. The Returns of vessels cleared outwards presented a similar result, being as follows:—

1832	British vessels cleared outwards	1,637,093 tons.
——	Foreign	466,333 "
1845	British	2,947,257 "
——	Foreign	1,361,940 "

Hence it appeared that the British shipping cleared outwards during this period had increased by 310,000 tons; while the foreign shipping had increased by 895,000 tons. The former had increased only at the rate of 80 per cent; the foreign at the rate of more than 190 per cent. In 1832 the British tonnage cleared outwards had been to the foreign as three to one; in 1845, it was to the foreign only as less than one and a half to one. There had certainly been an increase in the British tonnage during this period to a considerable amount. But then it should be borne in mind that our trade had at that time been greatly extended; and what he was

arguing was, that British shipping had not had its fair share in the carriage of the augmented amount of merchandise. The figures he had quoted, however, though their result was lamentable enough, did not by any means display the full extent of the unfortunate truth on this subject; for in the accounts of British vessels and tonnage entered both inwards and outwards, were included large numbers and amounts for steam vessels, which carried but small cargoes, and the number of whose voyages caused them to form a most undue proportion of the whole. In 1841, the whole number of steam vessels belonging to the United Kingdom was 791; tonnage 95,796 tons; and in that year there were "entered outwards" 17,318 steam vessels, the tonnage of which were represented at the enormous amount of 3,264,000 tons! So that these 791 steam vessels, by the frequent repetition of their respective voyages, were swelled into an apparent aggregate of upwards of 17,000; and their united tonnage figured at the astounding total of more than 3,000,000 tons. Such was the nature and value of the returns relied on by the Government on the subject. He trusted he had said enough to show, that it was not because the shipowners had flourished under the free-trade measures, that they now petitioned the House to proceed in a similar course of legislation; but it was because they believed that for them free trade had done its worst, and because they hoped that by its more general application to other classes—however those other interests might be injuriously affected—some benefit might ultimately result to their own interest. True, timber would be cheaper by the Government measure; and it might be imagined that the shipowner would have an interest in that cheapness. It had been stated that the amount of duty paid for timber used in shipbuilding, formed only five per cent of the entire amount imported. When he had recently read that statement, he was met by a cheer, the import of which he understood to be this: that though the shipowner would not benefit by having foreign and colonial timber cheapened, he would benefit by having the price of home timber reduced. If the shipowner did so benefit, it was obviously at the expense of the producer at home. But what encouragement would there be to the raising of supplies of timber at home, fitted for the shipbuilding of this country? And in the prospect of a war particularly, would it be wise or prudent, or politic, to be dependent on foreign States for the requisite supply of so vital and essential an element in our maritime and commercial greatness? The ground, however, on which perhaps the determination of the Government to reduce the discriminatory duties on timber was most to be regretted, was on account of the effect which this policy would have on our relations with our Colonies. He had heard with approbation the sentiment expressed by the Government, as to their determination, on the part of this country, to maintain a firm attitude in respect to the United States on the Oregon question. But he believed if this measure were carried, not only would it be unnecessary on our behalf to contest the Oregon territory, but that we might safely make a present of Canada to the United States at once. It would appear that Ministers were actuated almost by hostile feelings towards our Colonies. The Government had already by their Corn Law measure proposed to take away the advantage given to Canada so recently as 1842, in respect to the importation of Canadian corn, and appeared really to have conferred that boon upon the Colony entirely for the wanton pleasure of immediately withdrawing it. The benefit which Canada had derived from the Corn Law discriminations between her grain and that of foreign countries had not been inconsiderable. Great quanties of Canadian corn had, within the last two years, been imported into this country, and 1,500,000 cwt. of Canadian manufactured flour. This important and increasing trade it was proposed now suddenly to destroy; and, simultaneously with that, to ruin the timber trade of this Colony. He deeply regretted that the Government should have been betrayed into such a course of policy. Still more deeply should he regret to see the House betrayed into an approval of it. He was reluctant to intrude further upon their attention, but would ere he sat down venture to propose one question, which, he hoped, any Gentleman who might rise on the part of the Government would attempt to answer, namely, "If we carried out free trade to its full extent, of what use would be our Colonies?" He knew it had often been asserted on the benches opposite, that our Colonies were incumbrances; but he little expected ever to hear such a doctrine propounded on the part of Ministers, still less to find it carried into operation in their measures. But of this he was sure, that such measures must inevitably lead to such

results as that the Colonies must become eventually a burden only, and not a benefit. For these reasons he should cordially support the proposition of the noble Lord.

Mr. CARDWELL said, that his hon. Friend who had just sat down, commenced his observations by recommending to the right hon. Baronet at the head of Her Majesty's Government, a course which would have evinced much sounder discretion than moving that the petition from the shipowners should be printed; and he went on to say that these petitioners had changed their opinions, and that he believed that if they were asked to sign a petition, before the present measure had been announced to Parliament, they would have retained their former opinions, and would have signed a petition quite in opposition to the present measure. Why, did not his hon. Friend perceive that if gentlemen largely engaged in the shipping interests had changed their opinions, and had come forward solemnly to record that change of opinion, did he not see that everybody must necessarily attach increased force to that statement from a change in their opinions? If that had been done by gentlemen, not from their own convictions, but because Her Majesty's Government had announced the measure, did he not perceive the natural conclusion which that change led to? Did he not perceive how great the confidence must be on the part of those commercial gentlemen in those who proposed this measure, if on no better ground they thought it worth while to come forward in the face of Parliament and the country to withdraw opinions, which on former occasions they had solemnly recorded? Let him ask his hon. Friend, before he advised sounder discretion to Her Majesty's Ministers, what he would think of the discretion of an hon. Gentleman, who being entrusted with a different petition, moved that it be printed, when that petition contained a statement of this kind? Referring to 1842 it said, that petitions were presented to the Government and the Legislature by these very same parties, then, as now, purporting to be persons connected and conversant with the shipping interest. It recites that by those parties it was then universally contended, that the reduction of the discriminating duty to 25*s.* would eventually cause a transfer of a considerable portion of the timber trade from the Colonies to the timber-growing countries in the north of Europe. Another statement contained in it was, that the Shipowners' Association of Liverpool were of opinion that a reduction of discriminating duty on foreign timber to below 30*s.* was absolutely inconsistent with the shipping interests engaged in the Colonial timber trade. It also stated that it was indisputable that any reduction of the duty on foreign timber below 25*s.* would have disastrous effects on British navigation, while many contemplated most injurious consequences if it were reduced below 30*s.*; and some were apprehensive of dangerous results unless the duty of 45*s.* was exacted. Now, these Gentlemen set forth these opinions, as having been the opinions on which they insisted in 1842; they candidly admitted that not one of these expectations had been in the smallest degree verified, while all their experience in the interval had been on the opposite side. And what did they conclude by saying? Why, they manfully avowed that notwithstanding their experience, in spite of the facts, they stoutly adhered to their opinions. And this was the petition which, in the exercise of his discretion, his hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle had moved for and had printed with the Votes. Now, without meaning any disrespect to them, or his hon. Friend, he would submit to the House and the country whether, on their own evidence, the balance of sound discretion would be found in favour of them and his hon. Friend, or in favour of those who, concurrently with experience and in deference to facts, thought fit to change their opinions, and of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), who had been entrusted with their petition which he thought sufficiently remarkable to be entitled to the special notice of the House of Commons. What was the evidence on which they altered their opinions? His hon. Friend said that these shipowners being the first victims of free trade, came forward with their petition for the purpose of saving others from a similar calamity. The shipowners the victims of free trade! His hon. Friend invented all sorts of reasons why the House should not draw from the change of tonnage from 1842 to 1845, which amounted to nearly a million tons, the obvious inference to which it was entitled. His hon. Friend argued that because British vessels had increased at a lower rate than others, that was a proof of the decline of our trade. Why, what a rule by which to institute comparison! If a man who had only one ship bought another, he increased his number 100 per cent; the owner of one hundred vessels

must buy to the number of two hundred before he could have a proportionate increase to the other. We had increased between 900,000 and 1,000,000 tons; while in the aggregate all foreign ships had increased between 300,000 and 400,000. He was now speaking from an official account of the number of British and foreign vessels entered inwards and outwards in the respective years. They had increased from 974,392 tons in 1842, to 1,353,735 in 1845; and we from 2,680,838 to 3,669,853. The same paper gave the number of vessels, and of the men employed in navigating them; and the increase in the number of vessels which belonged to the various ports of the British Empire, was from 30,815 in 1842, to 31,320 in 1844. The calculation was not made for 1845; and, therefore, he was not in a condition to carry out the comparison; but, looking at the amount of tonnage, he was enabled to state that a very remarkable increase had taken place. With respect to Canadian timber, his hon. Friend asked of what value on earth the Colonies would be if this measure was passed; and said that when it was carried, and Canada ruined, we might make a present of Canada to any one who would accept it. When we had ruined Canada, his hon. Friend's proposition might be correct; but let the House consider whether we had ruined Canada. He found that in 1841—the last year of the old high duty—the amount of duty received was 450,000*l.* Now, allowing a proportionate deduction for the diminution of the duty, the amount ought to have fallen to 45,000*l.*; but instead of that the duty was—

In 1843	£68,000
In 1844	71,000
In 1845	94,000

so that the whole trade in timber with Canada had been more than doubled when the difference between the 10*s.* and the 1*s.* duty was considered. He thought, therefore, that the Government might put off making a present of Canada until the sound discretion of his hon. Friend was equal to the sound discretion of those whom he undertook to advise. The Chairman of the Liverpool Dock Committee had recently stated, "It had been represented that the timber trade of that port had declined; and that it had, at all events, reached its *maximum*, and would not increase. One fact alone exhibited, at least, its vast importance, viz., that there had been more artificers employed in its different department in this country during the last eighteen years, than in any other trade;" and then he proceeded to give the following statement of the number of vessels employed in Liverpool in the timber trade with British America:—

1838	305 vessels	.....	160,000 tons.
1842	165 „	.....	91,000 „
1845	453 „	.....	239,000 „

A similar statement was given as to the numbers of "pieces" of timber imported:—

1838	15,000,000
1842	9,000,000
1845	28,000,000

So much for Canadian shipping in the timber trade—for the tonnage of vessels, for the number of men, for the quantity of timber—so much, in the very years which his hon. Friend had selected for his comparison, for the ruin of colonial interests, and the destruction of the intercolonial trade. Well, but with all this increase of colonial import—with an admitted increase also of import from the Baltic—what had been the effect upon the price of oak at home? His hon. Friend who sat beside him, the Member for Lewes, had furnished him from the Admiralty with an account of contract prices. Referring to the contracts for English oak, he found the results to be as follows:—

March, 1833 ... ... / February, 1844	Same prices all round.
February, 1840 ... ... / 1841 ... ... / 1842 and to	15 per cent. added to the foregoing.
March, 1843	
December 1843	Reduction of 15 per cent on timber, plank, and tree-nails; 7½ on thick stuff.
January, 1846	Increase of 22½, on 1843. Same as 1840—1842. 15 per cent above 1833.

Now, if the legislation of that House was based upon evidence of facts, he should like to know what facts would in future be relied upon when a case was to be made out against the reduction of the timber duties? A Committee of that House which sat in 1835, reported that the duty then imposed by law on timber the produce of Europe, as compared with timber the produce of our North American Colonies, was too great, and might be reduced; and they further stated it to be their opinion that, having due regard to the interests that had been created in British North America, a reduction of the protective duty not exceeding 15*s.* per load appeared to them to be a fair arrangement. That proposition was not successful then; but in 1842 a greater reduction of protective duty had been

made. And had they not witnessed with satisfaction the result? Different kinds of timber were used for different purposes —for different parts, for example, of a house or of a ship. As you increased the supply of large timbers, you stimulated the demand for the planking; just as the consumption of timber operated upon the Excise by enhancing the demand for bricks. Thus while you increased the demand for labour, you cheapened the materials requisite to furnish for the people comfortable dwellings. Experience had shown that there was no reason why they might not take measures to increase the consumption of Baltic timber, and at the same time double the consumption of Canadian timber. Fortified by the facts which he had stated, he would venture to set up his own authority against that of his hon. Friend, confident that no such evidence could be brought against his predictions as he had produced in opposition to the views of his hon. Friend; and with a confidence not at all shaken by his hon. Friend's statements, he should ask the House to agree to the Resolutions.

Mr. H. HINDE explained, that in the return to which he had referred in relation to the steam vessels, the number of ships were not given, so that the remarkable apparent excess in the shipping was (notwithstanding the hon. Gentleman's attempted explanation) still referrible to the frequent voyages of the steamers included in the returns. He further wished to state that the question he had asked of the Government (and which the hon. Member had not attempted to answer) was, "If free trade were carried out fully, giving to other countries all the commercial benefits enjoyed by our Colonies—and we had thus all the burdens of our Colonies without being enabled to derive any advantage therefrom—what would be the good of our Colonies?

Mr. A. CHAPMAN said, having sat on every maritime or mercantile Committee of that House for the last thirty years, and having had more communication with the shipping interest than most Members (besides his own personal connexion with it), he ventured to express his opinions on the subject, in which he had acquired some considerable practical experience. It had formerly been the policy of the British Government to encourage the enterprise of our own subjects and colonists, with the view of securing sure supplies of the great necessaries of commerce, especially timber; and under the protection conferred, with this object, on our Colonial produce, large establishments had been raised, and much capital invested with a view to obtaining supplies from our own Colonies. For his own part, he should be happy to see timber coming in from the east and from the west, proportioned to the demand; but he feared lest the effect of transferring the timber trade from our Colonies to other countries should be to injure that important interest — the shipping of this country. He had apprehended, at the time of Mr. Huskisson's measure, and still more when the recent changes in the Tariff took place, that such timber-growing countries as Norway might attract much of our timber trade; and he found that though a few years ago only fifteen Norwegian vessels, with a tonnage of 1,131 tons, visited this country, last year there were 1,127 vessels, with a tonnage of 170,000 tons. Mr. Deacon Hume had, in his evidence before the Import Duties Committee (whence much of the new doctrine on these subjects had emanated), stated that he would not mind if all the ships engaged in the Canada timber trade were destroyed, as the effect would be to benefit the revenue by directing the trade from Canada with low duties to the Baltic with high duties. It might be imagined that with views like these, those who were connected with the shipping interest of this country could have no sympathy. There was no doubt that timber could not be smuggled. He really thought it was a fair subject for taxation, and it was a tax of which no man complained. He believed there was a great increase in the timber trade, which was owing, in some measure, to the large number of our railways; and in the expectation of much being required, there was at the present time in Liverpool, a greater quantity of timber than had been known for many years. He thought the extent and improvement of the trade were reasons why the House, in the course it was about to pursue, should be extremely careful not to injure the maritime trade of the country.

Captain HARRIS, as a naval Member of that House, begged to make some observations upon the subject now before it. He believed that if this measure was carried, a heavy blow would be struck against the North American trade with this country. There was no occasion for him to call the attention of the Government to the maritime interest. He had ever observed that this interest had met with the most

careful consideration. He should at once proceed to the facts upon which his opinion, with regard to the present measure, was formed. He would not attempt to detract from the cheering account of that trade which had been laid before the House. He had stated on a former occasion that he believed the Tariff to have worked most usefully for the country. But he must say that he also believed that the greatest amount of protection that could be given, ought to be given both to our colonial and native industry. He hoped, therefore, the Government would not reduce the timber duty, as had been proposed. He would ask whether, in the face of the evidence given in the Report of that Committee of British Shipowners, which sat in the year 1844, the Government would consent to lower those duties? He had not been able to arrive at the number of ships employed in the Canadian trade, but he did not think he should be over-rating them in stating them to be 1,200, and the men employed about 15,000. It was a very good school and nursery for our seamen. When he commanded a man-of-war on the North American station, he had completed his crew with first-rate seamen at the port of Quebec. There were upwards of 200 men there on an average at all times ready to enter our naval service. But it was not only this—we risked the loss of our Colonies. He would remind the House that the exports of this country to those Colonies were about 3,000,000; and those Colonies had no time allowed them to petition the House on the subject of these measures. He would call their attention to that fact, and remind them that on the last occasion when the timber duties were altered, there were several petitions presented to that House from New Brunswick and our other North American Colonies. He felt bound, therefore, to oppose the measure.

MR. G. PALMER said, that the question before the House appeared to him to be of vital importance—it concerned an interest which had been attacked by the free traders. But the present measure was fraught with much mischief to every interest of the country, more particularly, however, to the shipping interest. He should endeavour to show to the House, that in no one instance had it been beneficial. The right hon. Baronet might not have all the responsibility on his shoulders of the evil that would attend the passing of this measure, although he seemed as if he were jealous of the noble Lord opposite in taking the credit of it. He recollected on one occasion calling upon the House to look into the condition which the country had attained under the navigation laws. She had given laws to all the Continent. He had called upon the House to consider whether these laws were not the source of all our prosperity; and the answer was that all these things were gained by the peculiar energy of the country in spite of bad laws. He thought that the right hon. Baronet stood in the light of Ahab's prophets of old. He would deceive himself, and bring down destruction upon a devoted people. His own conviction upon the subject of the navigation laws had never been changed. Had the country come to this, that they were to cast away the bread of their children to strangers? Had the time come when the lion and the lamb were about to lie down together in this country? He did not know whether the right hon. Baronet took credit to himself for being one or the other. When any individual took up a new theory he would lend himself to nothing but that which would carry out his own purpose; and perhaps it was not extraordinary the right hon. Baronet had done that. The House had heard the other night a statement of the effects which these new meesures would have upon the silk trade. He could assure the right hon. Baronet that such was also the case with the shipowners of this country upon the passing of the navigation laws. He had himself sold ships for 5,000*l.* which cost originally 20,000*l.* He hoped he should not be considered as saying anything personally offensive to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government; but he could not help thinking that the right hon. Gentleman had been acting in an ungenerous manner towards the House and towards the country in making the returns now before that House. Whatever was stated at the Table ought not only to be literally but substantially correct, and then the deductions would be equally correct. He thought that as the population of any country increased, so the means of conveyance from one place to another must necessarily increase. From the year 1820 to 1844 the increase of population was twenty-eight per cent. He would state what had been the increase in shipping. In the year 1820 the number of vessels was 21,969; in the year 1840 the number amounted to 21,983; and in 1844 there were 23,283 vessels, showing an increase

since 1840 of 1,300 vessels. He thought, however, that it was necessary for the House to look with considerable doubt upon these returns. They had been made up by the introduction of a large number of steam vessels. The 30*s.* duty which had already been taken off timber, had gone into the pockets of the foreigner. The freight, which had been 14*s.* was now 21*s.*, and therefore the foreigner now received not only 30*s.* for the original price of timber, but also received the original freight. He believed the present measure would entirely shut the British ships out of the Baltic trade; and was not the Baltic timber preferable to the Canadian timber? And he would appeal to any naval officer to say whether the Baltic trade was not of all others the one most calculated to make British seamen? Men might go three or four voyages across the Atlantic without receiving half the experience which they would acquire from a voyage to the Baltic. He was quite sure the time would eventually come when every hon. Member of that House would see the evil consequences that must result from the present measure. It had been stated, in allusion to a petition which had been presented against this measure, that counter petitions had been brought from different parts of their country. He believed there were no names in those petitions of persons connected in the smallest degree with the general shipping trade: they were engaged in the local trade only. The measure now before the House affected every interest, and not merely a single class. The public, he repeated, were deeply concerned in it. The principle proposed was a novel, a great and a grand principle—its application was quite another thing. It was nothing less than the withdrawal of the protection of the State from her own inhabitants—it was an abandonment of a doctrine which they had hitherto been taught should exist between the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the State and the subject. They were now about to establish the theory of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest markets—a theory very freely entertained and insisted upon by men who were not very scrupulous as to the mode in which they obtained property; but not, he thought, worthy of adoption by a great country like this, which had grown into power and prosperity by different means. That hackneyed language of "class interests," used by hon. Gentlemen opposite, was not at all applicable—they talked very freely of "monopoly," but he knew of no monopoly in the invidious sense which they used the term. If it meant the fact of a great body being engaged in one particular calling, who were anxious to maintain their own rights—why, then he thought that, so far from discountenancing them, the Ministry was bound to consult their interests, for it was the individual interest which created public interest; the country had chartered such monopolies, and chartered them to their own advantage. Look, for instance, at the East India Company. It was open to every individual in this country to buy and sell as best he might; in that respect there was perfect free trade. The foreigner too ought to be treated with, but on terms of reciprocity; not the sort of bargain which we made with Prussia, giving all the advantage to that kingdom. We ought to get a *quid pro quo*. At the same time that he was anxious for friendly intercourse with all countries, he could not wish to encourage that intercourse at the expense of his own, nor to confer an advantage on one portion of the community which might be ruinous to another.

Mr. WARBURTON, having been at a former period of his life connected with the timber trade, wished to take that opportunity of complimenting Her Majesty's Government on the great improvements that they had already effected, and were now effecting in that trade. Formerly all deals paid the same amount of duty, no matter what their dimensions might be. Thus a deal seven feet long, nine inches wide, and one and a half inches thick, paid the same duty as a deal sixteen feet long, three inches thick, and eleven inches wide. The Government were, however, at length induced to abolish this absurd distinction; and since 1842 deals were allowed to be introduced at a rate of duty varying according to their cubic dimensions. He would beg to draw the attention of the House for a moment to the effect of the differential duty between Colonial and European timber, as settled by the Tariff of 1842. Prior to that period this duty had been 45*s.*: but in 1842 it was reduced to 25*s.* by Her Majesty's Government. On converting the returns which had been previously entered by tale, and in the case of deals by great hundreds, into cubic dimensions, and comparing the quantities imported from the Colonies and from European countries, as laid on the Table by the right hon. Baronet, he found the following

results :—The quantity of deals imported for home consumption into the United Kingdom in 1841 and 1842, from the Colonies, was 51,412 great hundreds, which, allowing 6½ loads to each, was equivalent to 334,178 loads. To this was to be added 632,184 loads of hewn timber, and 7,989 masts entered by tale. On comparing this return with that for the last year, he found that the total quantity, both of deals and of hewn timber, increased from 982,341 loads, payable according to the old duties in 1841 and 1842, to 1,290,341 in 1845, giving an increase of about 30 per cent, although the differential duty in favour of colonial timber had been reduced in that period from 45*s.* to 25*s.* a load. Now, he would look to the effect of this reduction on the foreign timber trade. The quantity of foreign deals imported in 1841 and 1842, including those entered by tale, was 321,400 loads, or thereabouts, which, added to the quantity of hewn timber imported, made in all 505,803 loads. That amount had increased in 1845 to 675,840 loads, showing the increase since the reduction of duty to be only about 20 per cent on the imports of foreign timber. So that taking the average imports of 1841 and 1842, and comparing them with the imports for the past year, they had this fact, that while the increase on the colonial timber trade, notwithstanding the reduction in duty was 30 per cent, the increase on European timber was no more than 20 per cent. But it was right, in the next place, to look to the prices which the shippers of timbers in the colonial and in European ports had been able to realize. In 1841 and 1842, the prices realized by the Colonies on the yellow or Weymouth pine timbers were, in 1841, 66*s.* a load, and in 1842, 56*s.* a load, leaving the average price about 51*s.* a load. In 1845 the price realized in the Colonies on yellow pine was 69*s.*, showing a considerable improvement on the price since the reduction of the protecting duty. He would next take the price of that species of timber which approached most nearly in quality to the European pine, namely, the red pine hewn timber, and he found that, while the price realized in the Colonies in 1841 and 1842 was 83*s.* a load, the price realized in 1845 was as high as 81*s.* a load, or very nearly what it had been before the protecting duty had been lowered. In European hewn timber the price in 1841 and 1842 was 46*s.* a load, and in 1845 it was 53*s.* a load, showing a very considerable improvement. In 1841 and 1842 the prices realized on foreign deals were 57*s.* and 53*s.*, making an average of about 55*s.*, and in 1845 the price was raised to 66*s.* a load; but, at the same time, the price of colonial timber, of the same quality, which in 1841 and 1842 was about 70*s.* a load, was in 1845 68*s.* a load, or very nearly the same, although the differential duty had been in the interim diminished to the extent of 20*s.* sterling per load. He was, therefore, justified in saying that all the anticipations that had been put forward in 1842 by the shipping and colonial interests of the ruinous consequences of the proposed reductions had been falsified, as the colonial timber now realized the identical prices which it bore before the reduction, and, as far as yellow timber was concerned, had actually advanced 17 or 18 per cent in price. But this was only one part of the question. An important consideration was, whether, considering the immense increase in the consumption of the country, caused by the construction of railways and other improvements, the Government were now to stand still and give the entire benefit of the additional demand to the Colonies, and thus raise the price on the consumer to an enormous amount. The enormous increase in the consumption of timber in 1845, as compared with 1841 and 1842, afforded a fair indication of the additional per centage which was likely to take place in the price of colonial timber, were the European timber countries to be precluded from competing with the Colonies on more equitable terms, He thought the Government had done quite right: first, in abolishing the mode of fixing the differential duty so as leave the same amount payable on the smallest and on the largest sized deals; and in the next place, by giving additional facilities for preventing the price of timber being raised to an enormous amount on the consumer, as it would undoubtedly be raised unless these additional facilities were afforded. It was contended that an injury would be done to the British shipping interest by the change; but it should not be forgotten that they had improved the condition of the British shipowner in other respects. As long as they had a sliding-scale in the corn trade, it was necessary for the importer of foreign corn to make the shipments in the greatest possible hurry, in order that he might get it into the market while the duty was low. He was consequently obliged to make use of foreign bottoms in his importations to a very con-

siderable extent. The Government, by opening the corn trade, would remove this evil, and afford the British shipowners the advantage of this trade. But there were other considerations besides those which related to the mere trade view of the question, which should make it imperative on the Government not to put a ban on the timber trade of the north of Europe. The American timber trade grew out of the two expeditions to Copenhagen; the timber trade with Europe having received its quietus in 1808. Before that period there was scarcely a Norwegian captain who did not wear a medal won by serving in the British navy; and almost all the best seamen that were to be found in the Norwegian navy had, in consequence of high wages and other inducements, previously served in the navy of this country. In 1807, however, the Government seized all the Norwegian ships in the British ports, and sent the poor captains to the various depôts of prisoners in this country, and the blow then struck was followed by the total destruction of the Norwegian timber trade before the end of the war. He thought it behoved this country to consider whether a nation having so large a trade as Norway, and possessing as it did some of the finest ports in the world along its coast, should not be encouraged rather than impeded to carry on trade with us. When they had formerly put a ban on the timber trade with Norway, an immense trade sprung up between that country and France; and it was for the British Government to consider whether they would drive the trade of a country having so large a mercantile navy as Norway altogether into the hands of France—knowing, as they did, that in such a case they could not expect the support of the Norwegian seamen, which they once before enjoyed, should a great European war again break forth: and no matter how much they might depend on an extensive impressment system, such a consideration was not to be lost sight of. Considering the great aggressive power which Norway possessed in the northern parts of the world, there were, he thought, strong political reasons for restoring and cementing the connexion which existed between that country and England before the war of 1798, independent altogether of the important commercial reasons to which he had before alluded. Another fact not to be lost sight of was, the success attending the reduction already made by the Government in the timber duties, as a financial arrangement. The revenue derived from timber in 1841-2 was —colonial 453,157*l.*; foreign 1,117,422*l.*; making a total of 1,570,579*l.*: while, in 1845, it was—colonial 94,262*l.*; foreign 945,345*l.*; total 1,039,607*l.*—thus showing that the duty on foreign timber, though reduced 45 per cent, had yielded 85 per cent of its former amount of revenue; while in colonial timber the duty, which had been reduced from 10*s.* to 1*s.* a load, or 10 per cent, produced 20 per cent of its former amount. The measure of the Government was, therefore, as successful in a financial as in a commercial and political point of view.

Mr. BORTHWICK agreed with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down as to the propriety of cultivating friendly intercourse with Norway; but he thought there was a still stronger reason for encouraging friendly relations with Canada. The hon. Gentleman said this was a shipowners' question. He protested against its being considered a question of shipowners or of any other class. It was the vice of the new measure that the great masses of the people which it affected were considered as classes having separate interests. It was not in his view either a colonial or a shipowners' question, but an Imperial question. As the hon. Gentleman had alluded to the prices of timber, he too would quote figures respecting our colonial and foreign timber trade. In 1841 the price of Canadian timber was 4*l.* 10*s.* per load; in 1846, 4*l.* 10*s.* The price of European timber was in 1841, 5*l.*, in 1846, 5*l.* Who, therefore, benefited by the reduction of duty made in 1842? It was quite clear it was not the British consumer. The hon. Gentleman pointed out the way in which the market was ready to absorb this increased importation, and alluded to the increase of railway enterprise since 1842. This might satisfactorily account for the price which timber had maintained; but would this demand be perpetual? The freight of American timber, and the cost of importation, was just double that of European, on an average. In 1841 the selling price of Baltic timber in this country was 5*l.* per load, so that after duty, freight, and other charges, it was computed that the foreign grower pocketed 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* In the same year, in the Canada trade, matters stood thus:—

Freight	£2	0	0
Charges	0	5	0
Duty	0	10	0
The selling price was	4	10	0

The Canadian grower was enabled, from the differential duty, to pocket 1*l.* 15*s.*, the difference being as between 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* and 1*l.* 15*s.* in favour of the colonial grower. The Tariff of 1842 reduced the differential duty to 1*l.* 5*s.* The importation of timber from the Baltic at present was:—

Freight	£1	2	6
Duty	1	5	0
Charges	0	2	6

It sold at 5*l.*, thus putting 2*l.* 10*s.* into the pocket of the European grower. As regarded Canadian timber, the following was the cost of importation at present:—

Freight	£2	2	0
Charges	0	7	0
Duty	0	1	0

Leaving for the original cost 2*l.*, as it sold here at 4*l.* 10*s.* The relative difference between the European grower and the Canadian grower in 1841, was as 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* to 1*l.* 15*s.*; the difference then was in favour of Canadian; but now it was in favour of the Baltic grower. It was clear that whatever benefit others might have received, two classes had certainly not been benefited—the British consumer, who still paid the same price, and the Canadian producer, who came into the British market at a disadvantage of 10*s.* as compared with 1841. The causes to which the late high prices of timber were ascribed were admitted to be of a temporary nature. It could not be expected that the making of railways could be always carried on as they had been; there must be a limit to those works, and, consequently, to the demand for timber which they occasioned; but be it recollected, the Government measure was permanent, and made no allowance for a decrease in demand. Then the employment of seamen, which was greater from the length of voyage in the Canadian than in the Baltic trade, was a consideration which ought not to be overlooked in their calculations. If this measure were carried into effect, the price of Baltic timber in the English market would be 3*l.* The Canadian timber was 10 per cent less in market value than the foreign timber, while the charges were higher, and if the Canadian grower were compelled to sell at the same sum of 3*l.*, he would sustain a loss of 8*s.*, which would drive him out of the market altogether. If these calculations were correct—and he knew they were—the effect of this measure would simply be, not merely to discourage but to annihilate in the market of this country the sale of Canadian timber. Three years ago, they had altered the Corn Laws in favour of Canada. But now, simultaneously with this destructive measure to their timber trade, they had equalised the duties on corn, so that our Canadian Colonies were to be placed precisely on the same footing as the United States. It seemed to him that the whole of these measures were based upon an erroneous principle—upon a principle which brought upon a footing of equality the subjects of all foreign Crowns with the subjects of the Crown of Great Britain; and if there were no other circumstances to make a difference between the two, this principle might very safely be adopted. If they would insure constant peace; if they would equalise the taxation of this country with the taxation of foreign countries; if England were but a second-rate power in the family of nations; if they were not responsible for the welfare of distant Colonies, largely and densely populated; if with the nationality of England there were not connected the advance of a high state of civilization—these measures of free trade might be applicable to our condition, and might be carried into effect with perfect safety. But, when they found the contrary of all this to be the case, and with respect to the measure more immediately under their consideration, that it affected the interest, first of the Canadian the country, he must give them his opposition. The greatness of this country depended upon the superiority of its navy, and its naval supremacy depended upon the colonial trade, which afforded the best and almost the only nursery for our seamen. But, by these measures which were now introduced, they were likely to injure both the shipping interest and the prosperity of the Colonies. The hon. Member for Kendal had attempted to show that the reduction of duty had increased the demand; but every one knew that the increased demand for timber arose from a course altogether unconnected with the reduction of duties. It arose from the extraordinary progress made in the construction of railways. He must apologize for detaining the House with these dry statements; but he did not think it well, in these times, when every vote was set down to a party purpose, that he should give his vote without explanation. He disclaimed being actuated by any other view in all the votes he gave, than an endeavour honestly to discharge his duty, and to do the best he could for all classes of Her Majesty's subjects.

Mr. HENLEY could not agree with what had been stated by the hon. Member for Kendal, that the measures adopted with regard to timber during the last two or three years had involved no loss to the revenue; because they would find that the average amount of revenue derived from timber in the years 1840 to 1842 had amounted to between 1,300,000*l.* and 1,400,000*l.*; while he believed the average amount of revenue derived from the same source, during the subsequent three years of 1843, 1844, 1845, did not exceed 800,000*l.* or 900,000*l.*; thus showing a loss of 500,000*l.* a-year. Besides, it ought to be observed, that during the last three years, there had been an extraordinary demand for timber caused by the construction of railways. On a question of this sort he should generally be disposed to leave it in the hands of Government; but he must say that the arguments which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Treasury had put forth required something very like official assurance to propound to the House. He had told them that the reduction in the amount of duty had caused an increase in the demand for oak timber, such as was used for the purposes of the navy; and he had gone into some statements to prove this, which appeared to him to require as much official assurance to set forth to the House as when the right hon. Baronet attempted to make them believe that the price of meat had risen in consequence of the introduction of foreign cattle; because the hon. Gentleman had forgotten that within these few years there had been an extraordinary expenditure for the naval estimates, that the navy estimates had lately been raised to six or seven millions sterling; and every one who examined the subject knew that this large sum was not expended in the increase of seamen, but in the increase of materials for shipbuilding. Now, it was well known that timber for naval purposes was so scarce that if Government went into the market and purchased to the extent of 100,000*l.* or so, up went the price directly. But he did not believe the hon. Gentleman would rise and tell the House that timber not used for shipbuilding purposes had so increased in price; if it had, he (Mr. Henley) was certainly not acquainted with it. He, therefore, thought it was not candid or fair in any Member of the Government to assign as the reasons for any statement, that which they themselves knew did not bear upon the point. But now he wished to make some observations upon the statements contained in the petitions presented to this House from the private bodies of shipowners, because he felt that this was a question deeply involving the mercantile marine of the country. He could not conceal from himself that on this occasion differences of opinion prevailed among the shipowners. He believed that a few years ago they were more unanimous than they were at present; he had, therefore, taken some pains to look into the reasons which those gentlemen who dissented from the general body of shipowners put forth; and he must say that it was a very singular position for them to take, because the shipowners were themselves a highly protected body, and must of necessity continue to be so. The right hon. Baronet, indeed, in the commencement of the Session, declared that he for one could no longer maintain the principle of protection; and, as often happened with a man when he was saying that which others had said before, and to which he had formerly been opposed, he went further even than those who consistently maintained the same principles. Thus, on the question of protection, all the best writers in favour of free trade admitted that it might do partial evil to the interests concerned, but that it would be for the general good; but the right hon. Gentleman went further than this, and challenged the House to show that any individual interest had suffered from the extension of free trade. Now, he (Mr. Henley) would in his turn challenge the right hon. Baronet to show that he really believed in the truth of his own assertion, by carrying out the principle to its full extent. At present foreign vessels were restricted from bringing to this country any produce except that which belonged to their own country; that is, a Swedish vessel could not bring here Russian produce, and *vice versâ*. Now, why should that be allowed? Why should not the Lincolnshire agriculturist, seeing that all protection was to be taken from him, be allowed to employ a Dutch vessel to carry his produce to the London market? The freight would be cheaper than an English vessel, and, therefore, there would be so much gain to the agriculturist. Then why should not the West Indian produce be brought over to this country in the cheapest possible way? To be sure the right hon. Baronet proposed to continue protection to the West Indian interest. But the noble Lord opposite had

given notice of his intention to oppose that course; and, of course, after the introduction of slave-grown Indian corn and slave-grown rice, no one could argue in favour of the exclusion of slave-grown sugar. That would be all cant, which the noble Lord would knock down as he would a ninepin. Why, then, should not sugar be brought to this country in foreign ships, the freights of which were one-third cheaper? So, also, with regard to sailors. The wages of foreign sailors were less than those of England; and if his proposition were adopted, the right hon. Baronet would then have an opportunity of descanting upon the great improvement in the mercantile marine, upon the increased amount of tonnage, and the consequent national prosperity. He thought the right hon. Baronet was the more apt to take this view of the case, because he had invariably observed, that, in every interest which the Government had touched, they had never, on any one occasion, gone into the condition of the operatives concerned in the measure. They had dwelt upon the increased quantities of consumption, and the increased amount of imports, all which might be perfectly true; but they had never touched upon the condition of the workmen. He apologized for detaining the House; but from personal reasons he felt a strong interest in this question; and he had not seen any arguments put forth by the shipowners which in his humble judgment did not cut their own throats, because as sure as effect followed cause, so sure would the results of this measure be detrimental to them; and instead of gaining by it they would be exposed to much sharper competition than they suffered at the present moment.

Mr. HUME concurred in opinion with the hon. Gentleman, that if the agricultural interest was entirely freed from protection, it was only right that the shipowners should be placed in a similar situation, that they should have the power of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest; and he would support any proposition the hon. Member might bring forward for effecting that object. He (Mr. Hume) complained of the proposal now before the House, though on very different grounds from the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. He complained that the duty was not entirely removed. He knew of no raw material which it was more important for the general interests of the community to render accessible at a cheap rate than timber; and, next to provisions, no article which, with reference to the erection of cheap and suitable dwellings, was more necessary to the comfort of the poor. He considered that the course of legislation hitherto pursued with regard to this article had been most objectionable; and he thought that the shipowners who concurred in opinion with the hon. Member who last spoke were acting against their own interests. The shipowners objected to reciprocity; and why? They said the materials with which they built their ships were much more expensive than the materials used in the construction of foreign ships. That was in consequence of the duty imposed upon foreign timber, which was now the only article used in the construction of ships subject to duty. In this country the construction of ships was more expensive by 5*l.* a ton than on the Continent; and a foreigner could build three ships with the same money with which an Englishman could build only two. The reduction of the timber duties would lessen the price of a ship's hull built in this country by one-half, or even perhaps two-thirds. Would this give no advantage to the shipowners? But, then, he might be told that, with respect to wages and the maintenance of seamen, the British shipowner could not compete with the foreigner. The expense of British seamen was certainly higher than that of foreign sailors; but this arose from the fact that English seamen obtained food of a much better class, and consequently of higher price, than foreign sailors. He was satisfied, however, that if the measure now before the House were adopted, the British shipowner would within five years be able to build ships at much less expense than at present, and the rate of freights would consequently be reduced. An English-built ship was always insured at a much lower premium than a foreign vessel. One of the effects of the present timber duties had been to drive shipbuilding from British ports to our Colonies, where vessels could be constructed much less expensively than at home. Yet no one would contend that the colonial ships were at all equal to British-built vessels; they were sold at a cheap rate, but they were worn out in ten years, while a British-built ship would last twenty years or more. The effect, then, of the reduction of the timber duties, would be to restore the shipbuilding trade to this country. The disadvantages under which the English shipowners laboured might be

classed under four heads: first, the cost of the hull and rigging, which if this measure were adopted could be completed as cheaply here, he believed, as in any part of the world; secondly, the rate of wages, which would now be equalized; thirdly, the price of provisions, in which there would now be a considerable reduction; and, fourthly, the duties on insurance. He thought that the amount of duty on marine policies was very objectionable, though he admitted that it had been reduced; but when men were put to run a race together, they ought to be equally loaded. The shipping interest had not the advantage of equal loading, though the course of their present legislation as far as it went was in the right direction. He recollected that in 1813 he declared at the India-house that he hoped to see the amount paid for tonnage to India, which was then 50*l.* per ton, reduced to ten guineas, and his observation was only laughed at; but he had lived to see the day when it was reduced to 7*l.* 10*s.*, or 7*l.*, which was considered remunerative. In consequence of the system of duties which had hitherto been maintained, British ships were inefficiently timbered, and the result was that more fishermen and seamen were drowned belonging to Britain than to any other country. Another lamentable result of the policy hitherto pursued on this subject was, that a large portion of the capital of our shipowners was invested in Danish and Norwegian vessels, because ships could be built in Denmark and Norway so much cheaper than here. But the system now proposed by the right hon. Baronet, if carried out, would put an end to that evil, and British capital would be employed in British ports. He had been intrusted with a petition, which stated that it would be important to the health and comfort of the labouring classes, if they were enabled to obtain cheap dwelling-houses; but that the existing high duties imposed on articles of consumption deprived them of that benefit. It was of the utmost importance that the working classes should have the means of obtaining cheap dwelling-houses. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had said a great deal about their desire to improve the condition of the working classes, and lengthy reports upon their sanatory co dition had been laid upon the Table of that House, which showed the miserably unhealthy hovels which they were obliged to occupy—the fruitful cause of disease and death amongst the poor of this country. All that, however—the horrid air which they were compelled to breathe, and the pestilence which followed on it—were the consequences of the high duty upon timber and on bricks; and he fearlessly asserted that every man who opposed the reduction of the duty upon those articles was contributing to maintain misery and disease amongst the working classes. Men who had been toiling their twelve or fourteen hours a day, ought to be enabled to occupy a place where they could at least breathe the wholesome air; but instead of that the taxes of the country confined them to miserable, unhealthy hovels, where the fresh air never penetrated; and when, in the course of time, they arrived at an age when they should be able to carry out their experience in surrounding themselves with small domestic comforts, they were fit only to be the inmates of a workhouse or an hospital. He wished most strongly to press that point of the dwellings of the poor of this country upon who felt disposed to oppose the reduction of the duty upon timber. What, too, was the effect of these duties on the agriculturists themselves? Every man knew that the expense attendant on the erection of buildings was an important item with the farmer. Who had tried American or home timber for this purpose, without finding that the whole of his labour and expense in the erection of buildings was thrown away, and that he was obliged at last to have recourse to Baltic timber, if he wished to have durable constructions? Consequently, the measure which the agriculturists were now opposing would, if passed, enable them to construct their buildings with a more durable material. What, he asked, would be the effect of the proposed measure on all classes, and among others, on the manufacturers? He would say, take the duty off entirely, and put them on a footing to compete with all the world. Give protection to nobody. What was protection but the giving to some individuals the right of taxing their neighbours? Every protectionist put his hand into his neighbour's pocket indirectly; doing that which, if an unfortunate man did in the streets, he would be taken to Bow-street, and transported to Botany Bay. No measure connected with commercial reform was of more importance than the entire repeal of the duties on timber; and he could only account for the right hon. Baronet not taking the duties all off at the present moment, by supposing that the right hon. Baronet, in making so great a change as he had done,

taking all his measures together, wished to see what the effect of those might be. He was confident that before another year elapsed the right hon. Baronet would see the importance of the total repeal of the timber duties, not merely to one class, but to all classes. He (Mr. Hume) should give his vote in favour of the reduction proposed by the Government, on the ground that timber was a raw material, and required by almost every class; and because he believed that the proposed reduction would be particularly beneficial to the working classes. At the same time, he expressed his regret that it had not been proposed to repeal the duties entirely and immediately.

LORD G. BENTINCK: In rising, Sir, to support the Amendment which has this night been brought forward with so much honesty of purpose, with so much ability, and with so much perspicuity by my noble Friend the Member for East Gloucestershire (the Marquess of Worcester), I am sure I am but uttering the sentiments of hon. Members, when I say that none could have listened to the observations which fell from that noble Member, and not have felt convinced he has given promise of eminence in future discussions of this House. I can assure the House that I should not have risen at a quarter past eleven the other night for the purpose of adjournment, had I not been of opinion that the subject of debate was of the most paramount importance. The question before the House appears to me to divide itself into three different heads. First, comes the question of revenue, and the relief of taxation to the people of this country. Secondly, the subject appears to resolve itself into a question how far we should maintain the system of protection to our Colonies, so long afforded them. And, thirdly, Sir, in discussing this question, we are bound to consider whether we shall, or shall not, continue to maintain a national maritime preponderance by the encouragement on that part of our trade, which gives employment to our native seamen. Many returns and statements of figures have been laid before the House by the Ministers of the Crown, and on other occasions by the Board of Trade; and I will commence my observations by endeavouring to show that no dependence can be placed on a superficial view of the figures emanating from the latter. A lamented and illustrious statesman, a relative of mine, made this observation—that the last thing to which he inclined to pay any attention—the last thing he felt inclined to consult—the last thing he felt inclined to believe, was a statement of figures made to this House. And this may truly be said, I think, of the figures produced by the Board of Trade. Now, to show how difficult it is to judge of the real condition of the commercial marine of this country by the statistics of the Board of Trade, it is only necessary to refer to the Tables of Revenue and Population, published by Mr. Porter in 1841, where it is stated that the number of registered steam vessels is 791, and the tonnage carried by them 95,795 tons. By another portion of a document emanating from the Board of Trade, it seems this country did not then possess 791 vessels of this class; but not less than 17,000, with a tonnage, not of 95,000 tons, but of 3,264,459 tons. Now, it appears to me the mode adopted of arriving at these larger numbers is by registering the voyage of every wretched miserable sloop that leaves the ports of the country; so that if each of these vessels made two voyages a month to Ostend, for instance, which would be twenty-four voyages for the year, each would enter into the account as twenty-four vessels. Therefore, this would be the effect—that an East India ship of 500 tons, making one voyage in the year out and home, and employing thirty seamen, would figure in these returns as 500 tons; while a wretched, paltry sloop, such as I have mentioned, carrying only 50 tons, and manned by two men and a boy, making her only voyage to Ostend or Antwerp, would represent 1,200 tons. Well, then, these figures—emanating from authority, mind—being so fallacious, how can we look at the returns of the Board of Trade and judge of the amount of our mercantile marine, or the extent of our foreign commerce? How are we to draw, or how can any man draw, correct conclusions from such documents? This small sloop of which I speak, its crew earning in wages 72*l*., would represent more tonnage than the East India vessel paying wages to the amount of 720*l*. By the same rate, an Ostend steamer of 100 tons, and manned with five men and a boy, making two trips per week, would cause a splendid display of 10,400 tons. And again, a sloop of fifty tons, would show more than a Chinaman of 1,200 tons, manned by a crew of seventy-two men, and earning 1,728*l*. per annum. I could add other illustrations to those already given, and might speak of the returns of trade in guano, in which it

is stated there are 679 ships employed, the tonnage of which is 219,764 tons, the crews 11,434 men, and the amount of wages 205,812*l*. These vessels brought home cargoes valued at 1,668,000*l*. Now compare the Return of this trade with the Return of registered steam vessels, and then judge of the accuracy of these returns for comparison. Could any comparison be made with the guano trade, which is said to employ upwards of 11,000 seamen, and the return of registered steam vessels and their tonnage. I hope, Sir, I have shown to this House sufficient to convince it that we cannot rely upon the statements made upon the position of our foreign trade; and its Members must not be carried away by the statistical information issued by the Board of Trade. But having touched upon this subject, I will address a few observations to the House upon the matter of price. The hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Warburton) has stated that the reduction of duty kept the Americans from obtaining an excessive price for the timber of that country. That is a point on which I will meet the Ministry. In the year 1842, when a reduction of taxation was proposed, it became me, in the exercise of my duty as the representative of a constituency connected with the shipping interest, to wait on the President of the Board of Trade, the Earl of Ripon, and state to him that the reduction of the duty on timber would have one of two effects, either that the natives on the shores of the Baltic would pocket the duty taken off their products, or that the Canadian trade would be injured to some extent. I think I can show to a demonstration that one of those results has happened. I will show by evidence which cannot be doubted, that the average price of timber from Quebec has been reduced, whilst the large amount of the duties taken off has gone into the pockets of the foreigner. I hold in my hand a list of the average prices of timber, which was furnished by Mr. Ranklin, of Liverpool, and sent to that gentleman by Messrs. Ranklin, of Elsinore. The firm which has furnished this information is of the highest character, and engaged in extensive trade; and therefore the statement given by these gentlemen may be relied on as correct by the House. Now, I find that the price of red pine in Canada in the years 1839 and 1840, was 9*d*. per foot. In 1841 it was $9\frac{1}{2}d$. per foot. This makes an average of $9\frac{1}{4}d$. per foot. I omit the year 1842 from my statement, because the Ministry do not approve of looking at that period. I do not state the average of that year—the year 1842—because it seems that Ministers almost regard the commencement of the world as dating after that year. Ministers would almost seem to regard that period, as the era of the Revolution in France had been regarded by those engaged in it, and desire to date all future time from its commencement. The year 1842 is so highly regarded, that it would be nothing wonderful if we no longer dated so many years after the birth of Christ, but after the advent of the right hon. Baronet, Sir Robert Peel, to office. I shall, Sir, under these circumstances, leave out this year 1842. I shall apply myself to the three years before 1842, and the three years following that memorable era; and I find the average price of timber for the three years before 1842, was $9\frac{1}{2}d$. per foot; and I further find, that the average price for three years following 1842, had fallen to $7\frac{3}{4}d$. per foot. This is sufficient to show that the reduction in the price of red pine coming from Quebec was $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I will also give the House the price of yellow pine, which I think the hon. Member for Kendal admitted had fallen in price after the duty had been lowered. I find the average of yellow pine before the duty was reduced was $4\frac{3}{4}d$. per foot, and which fell to $4\frac{1}{4}d$., making a reduction by the effect of differential duty of 10 per cent. A reduction, then, had taken place in Canada of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the price of red pine, and of 10 per cent in yellow pine. Yet, if we refer to the statement of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, we should learn that by the reduction of duty prices would not fall but rise. I think, Sir, I have shown that those persons who represented the shipping interest in the year 1842 have not been so far out in their calculations as the right hon. Baronet would have the country believe. I have other returns than those I have given, but I think the House will be satisfied with those of Messrs. Ranklin on Canadian timber, which I have quoted, and may be relied upon. I will now refer to the price of Baltic timber; and I am extremely glad to say I shall quote an authority of great weight with this House. It is always pleasing to quote from the speeches of a Cabinet Minister, but I can now quote from the published writings of a Cabinet Minister, who, rather than contravene his opinions, thought proper to resign his seat. I quote from the

pamphlet of Mr. Gladstone, published in 1845. The object of Mr. Gladstone in this pamphlet, was to show the great advantage the consumers would obtain by the reduction of the duties. He said, that up to the year 1845—the period at which the right hon. Gentleman wrote—the measure of the Government had not had fair play, and that the experience of another year would afford a better test of the advantages the consumer would derive from their operation. He referred to those predictions he made at the time those measures were passed, in respect of which we have been so much laughed at. The right hon. Gentleman says—

"When, however, it is remembered how peculiar was the course of the timber trade, and the mode of preparing deals for the British market under the former law, that we have only two years of the new system before us, and that timber does not come here until after the timber is cut, I think it is evident that another twelvemonth at least must elapse before we can fully appreciate the benefits of the alteration which has been made. As, however, it was confidently predicted by many persons that the consumer would not obtain the benefit of the great reduction of the duties on foreign timber, I have referred to trustworthy sources of information, and have obtained the following results."

Mr. Gladstone then says, that it appears that the price of Dantzic or Memel timber in the London market, duty paid, was, in January, 1842, 5*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* per load, and that, in January, 1845, when the duty was lower by 30*s.*, the price varied from 4*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* to 4*l.* 10*s.*, and, consequently, the mean price was 4*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.*; the reduction to the consumer in 1845 being 1*l.* 3*s.* 9*d.*, leaving the remaining 6*s.* 3*d.* to go into the pocket of the foreign producer. Now, Sir, I have taken the same month of January, in 1846, and I find that, at that period, the price of Dantzic or Memel timber per load, duty paid, in the London market, varied from 4*l.* 10*s.* to 5*l.*; mean price being 4*l.* 15*s.* The result is that the reduction to the consumer in January, 1846, out of the 30*s.* of reduced duty, is no more than 16*s.* 6*d.*, the other 13*s.* 6*d.* going into the pocket of the foreign grower. And, Sir, I want to know, whether my hon. Friends around me call upon the Government to reduce the excise duty, of which the profits are divided between the consumers and the growers of the articles on which the duties are levied, they are not wiser than Her Majesty's Government, who seem to have adopted this principle, viz., that we should abandon all reduction of excise duties, and limit ourselves to reduction of customs duties, that is, of duties upon articles which came into competition with the industry and labour of our own people? But the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) is not contented with the prices in the London markets only, but goes further, and refers to those of the Liverpool market. He says that the price of Dantzic fir, common and middling, sold in Liverpool, was—

		per foot.
In Jan. 1841	... 26½d. to 27d.	... mean 26¾d.
" 1842	... 24½d. to 25½d.	... " 25d.
" 1845	... 19½d. to 21d.	... " 20¼d.

showing a reduction in 1845, as compared with 1841, of 6½*d.* per foot, or 27*s.* 1*d.* per load; and a reduction in 1845, as compared with 1842, of 4¾*d.* per foot, or 19*s.* 10*d.* per load. But the result of this is, that the foreign producer, who, in 1845, as compared with 1841, put 2*s.* 11*d.* out of the reduced duty of 30*s.* in his own pocket, did, in 1845, as compared with 1842, put into his own pocket, no less than 10*s.* 2*d.* of the same 30*s.* But I have taken the liberty of carrying forward the calculations of the right hon. Gentleman, and I find that, in the month of January, 1846, the price of Dantzic fir, common or middling, sold in Liverpool, had risen to 23*d.* and 24*d.*, the mean price being 23½*d.*; so that, if you compare the respective years 1841 and 1842 with 1846, the period by which, as the right hon. Gentleman has told you, you were to be enabled more fully to appreciate the results of this measure, you will find that the reduction to the consumer in 1846, as compared with 1841, has fallen to 3¼*d.* per foot, or 13*s.* 6½*d.* per load, and that the reduction in 1846, as compared with 1842, has fallen to 5*s.* 2½*d.* per load: the gain to the foreigner being 16*s.* 5½*d.* in 1846 as compared with 1841, and, in 1846 as compared with 1842, no less than 24*s.* 9½*d.* Now, Sir, I am aware that it may be said that the trade with the Canadas has, notwithstanding, greatly increased. It is perfectly true, that the trade has increased; but I apprehend that that increase has not arisen from any reduction of these duties, but that it is to be attributed to the great increase in railway speculation, and the consequent demand for timber for railway sleepers and buildings. ["Hear!"] Do those Gentlemen who cry "hear" think, let me ask them, that any one of those railways which have been constructed, would not have been constructed if these duties had not been altered? I am myself a

holder of railway shares; and I must confess that I never remember it to have been a matter of question whether a railway should be constructed or not, or whether wooden sleepers instead of stone should be adopted, in consequence of Her Majesty's Government having altered the timber duties, and that wood could be got *5s.* 2*d.* a load cheaper. I do not at the moment see my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Hudson) in his place, or I would venture to appeal to him whether one foot the less of timber would have been bought for railway purposes, if the duties had remained the same as they originally were. I know well what his answer would be; and, if so, it must be clear to this House—so far at least as increased consumption is concerned in respect of timber—that the reduction of the duties has been an unmitigated loss to the consumer; and that, but for this increased railway speculation, the Canadas would have suffered much both as regards the price of their timber, and the increase of their exports. But the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, on a former occasion, appealed to the trade of Liverpool, and drew a comparison of the tonnage employed in 1845, as compared with his favourite year of 1842. I think my right hon. Friend said that 222,000 tons entered inwards in 1845, and 180,000 in 1842. But, that the House may see how unfair my right hon. Friend is in making quotations, I will read a statement from a circular of Messrs. Dempsey, Frost, and Co., dated Feb. 22, 1846. I think that my hon. Friends around me may have good reason to complain that the information which I moved for some six or seven weeks since has been kept back so long. I refer to a Return, for which I have moved, of the timber-laden ships entered inwards for the last seven years. And I may take this opportunity of saying that it was only this morning we got a Return, which had been for some time moved for, of the guano-laden vessels which have entered inwards, whilst, if the right hon. Gentleman moves for a Return, it is presented the next day. But the right hon. Gentleman spoke, on a former occasion, of the great increase of the trade of late. But why was that? Why, the revolution, I may almost term it, which he himself produced in the commerce of the country in 1842, threw the trade into complete confusion. I find that the tonnage employed in the British American trade in 1842, was 165 ships and 91,179 tonnage; but, if I look to the year before, I find that, instead of 165 ships and 91,179 tonnage, the ships were 318, and the tonnage 174,948. The right hon. Gentleman never condescends to look back to the time when the Whigs were in office. But, looking back all the way to the year 1831, I find no two single years in which the amount of tonnage employed in the British American trade was so low as that which the right hon. Gentleman takes as his criterion. I will take the average of three years since the alteration of the timber duties, and compare the results of the North American trade with the same during earlier triennial periods, and then contrast it with the results of the Baltic trade. I find that the average increase on the last period of three years, as compared with the three years previous to 1842, is 36 per cent of tonnage in the North American trade; but comparing the three years of 1839, 1840, and 1841, with 1831, 1832, and 1833, I find the increase was 66 per cent; so that it appears that the Canada trade was progresing before the alteration in the reduction of the duty; and that it has not progressed since, notwithstanding the demand caused by the increase of railway speculation. In contrasting the Canada with the Baltic trade, I find that the average importation of the three years 1831, 1832, and 1833, by timber-laden ships, was 21,164 tons. In the triennial period immediately before the reduction of the differential duties, the average tonnage laden with Baltic timber fell from that amount to an average of 14,442, so that whilst under the old duties the Baltic importation fell one-third, the importation from Canada, under the differential duties, increased by 66 per cent. I think, then, Sir, I have shown good cause why our Canadian Colonies have reason to be alarmed at this alteration, and, Sir, I much fear they are alarmed already. The Canadian mail arrived but two days since; and what is the intelligence she has brought? Why, Sir, that the greatest dissatisfaction prevails in the Canadas, and that they are already discussing the question whether it is not better that they should be annexed to the United States of America. The hon. and learned Member for Liskeard shakes his head; but this, I assure him, is the information which has come to this country. They say—

"We admit your cotton manufactures, we admit your woollen manufactures, at 7½ per cent duty, whilst we place 15 per cent upon those of the United States; and if you are about to withdraw

from us protection—you, who only two years ago, gave to us the boon of the Canada Corn Bill—if you are going to deprive us, as you deprive the farmers of England, of protection, and to extend the principle you now apply to timber, to corn as well, we had better by half join the United States."

But I will read a passage from the leading article of the *Montreal Gazette* of the 25th of February last; and, perhaps, I ought more properly to have observed, it was in Canada West that the feeling to which I have referred principally prevails. The article to which I allude says:—

"When Lord John Russell, now some fifteen years ago, came down with a proposition for demolishing the pocket boroughs, an hon. Legislator"—[I well remember the occurrence, for I sat by the side of my old friend Mr. John Smith; for he it was at the time]—"an hon. Legislator said, that the temerity of the proposal 'fairly took his breath away.' The boldness of the financial scheme of Sir Robert Peel, striking at once at provisions, corn, and timber, at every branch of trade in this Colony, on the protection of which the producers had relied, has had something of a similar effect here. The majority yet remain in breathless astonishment, mingled with no little consternation and alarm, and not the less so that we are so remote from the scene of action, that in all probability the deed will be consummated before our remonstrances can be heard. We have at present, however, little time or space at our disposal to speculate on the consequences of the apparently inevitable carrying of the Primier's measure; and we only wish to convey to our English readers what appears to be the impression of the best informed persons in this quarter."

Will the free traders now—will the hon. Gentlemen opposite now—taunt us with unnecessary delay? Thank God, we have delayed this measure till the "remonstrances" of our Canadian Colonies have been heard; and, but for the assistance of the patriotic band around me, the measure would have been carried there without it. The Colonies have now, however, been heard; and I trust that this House will pause before it passes hurriedly through it a measure which has created such consternation and alarm in our Canadian possessions. Surely, Sir, this is not the time—when America is arming her seaboard, and when Mr. Quincy Adams impiously and blasphemously calls to his aid the Word of God as a justification for lighting up the firebrand, and unleashing the hell-dogs of war; surely this is not a very happy moment for Her Majesty's Government to shake, by their Tariff and Customs Act, the fidelity and attachment of our Canadian fellow subjects. There is a little cloud in the west, which may grow blacker still, and, perhaps, break upon us, if such measures as these are adopted in regard to our Canadian Colonies. Sir, I am as anxious as any man that peace should be maintained with honour. I think this country can well afford to repose upon her laurels, and not to enter again upon the contests of war. I must say that I do not think that the way to obtain peace is by a dishonourable sacrifice of our colonial, or of our domestic, industry. I am as willing as any man can be, that, if any doubt arises as to our rights, they should be referred to any umpire—I care not whom—and, rather than we should wrongfully take anything where a doubt may exist as to our right to take it, willingly will I concede it to the American States. But if it comes to this, that the Bible is to be quoted as the foundation for America's title to the Oregon territory, I trust that we shall not go sneaking to America with an offer of free trade in corn, of the birthright of British farmers, and of the carrying trade of British shipping. If, Sir, all hon. means shall have been used in vain, I shall meekly and humbly appeal, in confidence, to the All-powerful God of battle, and not address America in the language of purchase, but the thundering broadsides of line-of-battle ships. Firm in the justice of our cause, when the last resources of peace are gone, then, with the assistance of an All-just Providence, fearing no human enemy, we will send those British seamen, whom, by such measures as this of to-night you are going to destroy—we will send those British sailors to visit the seaboard of America, and to speak to her in terms that cannot be misunderstood. The Member for East Gloucestershire has accurately stated the number of seamen employed in the Baltic trade, and the small proportion of them that are English compared with the number of those who are Russians, Norwegians, and Prussians. In 1844, as compared with 1841, it appears that the number of seamen in the foreign trade, engaged in the carrying of Baltic timber, had increased to upwards of 11,000, whilst yours had only increased to between 1,100 or 1,200. It is a question whether, under our laws, we can keep pace with the efforts of foreign seamen; and if I show what I contend I have shown, it proves that your present regulations are not such as will conduce to the continued maintenance of your pre-eminence on the seas. But the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury seemed altogether to limit his view to the trade with Great Britain, and says to us, "See

what you have done, on a comparison between yourselves and the whole world." But that I may show how little there was in his observations, I will turn the table upon him, and show how the trade of Denmark stands. I will first refer to Prussia. Here is a proof of the advantages of free trade. You altered your navigation laws in the year 1825 or in 1826, I do not now remember which, and what has been the consequence? I will read you a statement respecting the shipping trade with Prussia for eleven years. I find in 1828 the carrying trade of Prussia was sustained by 468 vessels belonging to Great Britain, and by 224 belonging to Prussia; in 1829, by 465 British and 254 Prussian; in 1830, by 332 British and 213 Prussian; in 1831, by 285 British and 213 Prussian; in 1832, by 238 British and 331 Prussian; in 1833, by 199 British and 373 Prussian; in 1834, by 131 British and 376 Prussian; in 1835, by 82 British and 387 Prussian; and in 1836, by 149 British and 439 Prussian. Now, how is it I find that in eleven years after 1826, namely, in 1837, that instead of the trade being carried on by 468 British ships and 224 Prussian ships, it was carried on by 201 British ships and 411 Prussian? How is it, I ask that in the eleven years following 1826, the 468 British had fallen to 201, while the Prussian vessels had risen in number to 411? The return I have just read, shows that the ships of Great Britain fell off one-half, while those of Prussia had augmented to nearly double. With such a fact self-evident, I should like to know how you are to keep the balance of your power, as far as Prussia is concerned. Now, in respect to Denmark, I shall briefly glance at the state of our shipping trade, as compared with that country: well, I find, by reference to Mr. Macgregor, that in the year 1838, there passed—

	British ships.	Danish Ships.	
The large Belt ...	7	2,068	
Sleswick, Holstein Canal ...	11	1,318	
Copenhagan	108	4,068	
Aalborg	nil	22	Coal ships & a few cargoes of salt & iron.
	126	7,476	

This shows, in the carrying trade with Denmark, the proportion of British vessels engaged was, in 1838, 177 to 1,476. In 1844, I find that the number of Danish ships entering the ports of Great Britain was 1,667, the tonnage 123,674, and the crews 8,120; while the number of British ships from Denmark to Great Britain was only 59, the tonnage 7,423, and the crews 444. I will next take the revenue returns of the right hon. Gentleman himself (Sir Robert Peel), and what do I find the result to be? The returns are certainly jumbled together in such a way that it is difficult to collect direct proof, in order to ascertain the question we have to decide. The question I understand to be this: How has our foreign trade prospered under those alterations? Our colonial trade is a protected trade, and under that system has flourished; but in those returns to which I have alluded, the colonial trade is brought to the help of the foreign, and hence we find a difficulty in arriving at a correct result. As it is, I find, by the return of the registrar of shipping, an authority than which there can be none better, because there can be no deception it it, that in the year 1820 the tonnage amounted to 2,648,593 tons; that in 1844 it had risen to 3,637,231 tons; thus showing an increase of 988,636 tons, or, in other words, an increase of 37 per cent. But in the mean time your population had increased at the rate of 39 per cent, so while the population of Great Britain increased 39 per cent, the number of registered ships increased only 37 per cent. I want, therefore, to know, Sir, whether there is any just reason to boast of the prosperity of our shipping interest, when it is proved, beyond all matter of doubt, that it has not kept pace with the population? Let us now see how it fared with foreign. Did it increase 37 per cent? I find that in 1820 the tonnage of foreign vessels entered in British ports amounted to 561,047 tons, and that in 1832 it had increased to 1,353,745 tons. Thus, while our registered tonnage increased 37 per cent, the foreign increased 141 per cent. This may be a question to try our strength with the United States. I find in the period from 1820 to 1844 the registered tonnage of the United States increased from 1,280,150 to 2,280,095 tons, showing an increase of 77 per cent. During the same period, let us look at what has been the progress of our importation in the articles which form the principal cargoes of the foreign trade of this country. I find that, in the commodity of cotton, from 1820 to

1844, the increase of importation has been 344 per cent, and in timber 77 per cent. Thus, you will perceive that with the increase of the two bulkiest articles the increase of registered tonnage has been but 37 per cent. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) has taken the year 1842, and I will take the same period. I find it has been stated, in the first place, how much foreign trade has increased since 1842. I find the foreign trade, as compared with 1842, has increased from 2,734,983 to 2,947,157, showing an increase in tonnage of 212,274 tons. I have already shown you that in the Baltic trade alone the number of foreign seamen within the last year increased 11,000, no doubt many of them performing more than one voyage, some perhaps two or three. How is it in the case of British seamen? They have increased in number in the same period from 214,609 to 216,350, being an increase of 1,741; therefore not in the foreign trade alone but in the entire number of seamen employed, the increase has been but 1,741. I find on looking at the trade of America that on going back to the year 1769, when the United States were still British Colonies and dependencies of the British Crown, and when the population was but two millions, that the number of ships engaged in that trade was 1,078, and the number of British seamen 28,900. At the present day, after a lapse of seventy-seven years, the number of seamen engaged in trade with the United States does not exceed 20,000, while the population of the States has increased from 2,000,000 to 20,000,000. This shows the nature of your Colonies, and yet, without even consulting them, or without waiting to hear the opinion of the Canadas upon a subject so vitally important to their staple trade, you are trying to force a measure which they confess has filled them with alarm and consternation. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kendal (Mr. Warburton), has made some reference to the expedition to Copenhagen, and has stated what he terms "a fact," but which I think is only a political metaphor—namely, that it was a matter of notoriety that at the end of the war scarcely a Norwegian captain was without a medal or decoration attesting his bravery in the service of this country. This is the first time that I have ever heard of such rewards. A right hon. and learned, and I may say a gallant Friend of mine partook in the glories of that day, when he found a Nelson and a Wellington vying with each other to shed the greatest lustre upon the annals of those glorious victories, and contending to maintain inviolate the independence of their native land. Yes, Sir, my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General (Sir F. Thesiger), I believe partook in the glory of those splendid naval achievements, the battle of Copenhagen; he has been ever ready to serve his country in the hour of danger, for when England was struggling with the united armies of America, and almost the entire of Europe, he served beneath her colours, and, when peace was restored, turned his great abilities with no less success to other more pacific pursuits. Yet, Sir, although my hon. and learned Friend was engaged in the battle of Copenhagen, I have never seen any decoration of merit appended from his button-hole. If medals were distributed, as the hon. Member for Kendal assures us they were, my right hon. Friend has not been dealt fairly by, for he can boast of no such distinguished trophy. [Several hon. MEMBERS: Divide, divide! Question!] Hon. Gentlemen do not like to hear this discussion. I am aware hon. Gentlemen would wish to bring this portion of the debate to as rapid a conclusion as possible; but I think it is a question upon which we who seek to maintain the maritime strength of England, and who wish to retain the affection and allegiance of our Canadian Colonies, are entitled to have a fair and attentive hearing. I do not wish the House to form any erroneous opinions upon this subject. Let us remember that as the Danes were once ready to enlist under the tri-coloured banner of France against us, it is not probable they will readily forgive or forget the injury we inflicted on them as a retaliation. I think, recollecting as we do the sentiments that prevail among a portion of the French people, we ought not to be in too great a hurry to pass any measure that may tend to revive irritated feelings, or weaken our defensive power. Sir, what we have seen before we may see again. Hon. Gentlemen have derided the flag of protection and those who are prepared to support it. I for one am not ashamed to hoist the flag of protection. [*Calls of* "Divide!"] Let those who cry so loudly "divide, divide," get up and answer me and refute my statements if they can. I have defied them before, and I defy them now to meet me on any of my statements, or to contradict any of my allegations. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Lambeth knows I am not

afraid to submit my figures to investigation, and I defy him to answer the statements I have made. I am not ashamed, and I never shall be, to hoist the flag of protection. Do the gentlemen of England remember the past seasons of deficient harvests? Do they remember the twenty years' war? Do they remember that struggle, without a parallel in the history of the world, when every country of Europe was desolated by military invasion and all the concomitant horrors of warfare—when Prussia and Russia were laid waste —when the noble and patriotic Russians were obliged, rather than permit their capital of Moscow to fall into the hands of the French, to reduce it to ashes? Do the "gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease," remember that their property, nay more, that their lives, and the lives of all they hold dear, are dependent upon the courage of those British seamen—the defenders of Old England's wooden walls? If hon. Gentlemen who so impatiently call for a division, wish it, they may enlist under the Norwegian banner, with its white ground and crimson cross, or under the flag of America, resplendent with its thirteen stars; but I am assured my hon. Friends who surround me will enlist with me under the old weather-beaten union jack of England—

> "The flag that braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze."

Sir G. CLERK said, it was not his intention to trespass long upon the patience of the House; neither would he, in the few observations he had to make, travel far from the question, but, on the contrary, strictly confine himself to the proposition before the House. If he might be permitted, he would be glad to state, that the question now under consideration was, whether upon any article not a primary necessary of life, but conducive, in a great measure, to the health and comfort of all classes of the community, they ought to reduce a duty amounting to 35 per cent—not to take it away, but to retain a protective duty upon an article of an inferior description, which they could obtain from their own Colonies. The noble Lord who had last addressed the House, objected to the reduction of duty upon three grounds, viz., loss to the revenue, injury to our colonial dependencies, and the necessity that existed for maintaining our supremacy at sea. The hon. Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) had also objected to the change, on the ground that a certain amount of revenue would be unnecessarily thrown away by reducing the duty from 25*s.* to 15*s.* But if that statement were correct, what would become of the allegation that we should be inundated with foreign timber under the proposed alteration? The fact was, that an additional importation of about 200,000 loads of timber, would make up for the loss to the revenue which the diminution of the duty would occasion. He believed that, under the measure then before the House, a larger quantity of timber than heretofore would be introduced into this country; because the Canadian timber and the Baltic timber were of totally different qualities, and were used for totally different purposes. Nothing but the great difference in the prices could have induced the people of this country to have used Canadian yellow pine for purposes to which the Baltic timber was peculiarly applicable. Complaints had invariably been made, that reductions of timber duties would be destructive to the shipping interest of this country, and ruinous to the Canadian trade. Those predictions had been made in the year 1821, when it had been proposed to reduce the protecting duty on Canadian timber from 65*s.* to 45*s.*; and again in the year 1842, when it had been proposed to reduce the protecting duty from 45*s.* to 25*s.*, similar predictions had been uttered. Upon that occasion, hon. Members who resisted the withdrawal of a portion of the protective duty, stated that the measure would be productive of the worst possible consequences—that the Canadian trade would be ruined, and the interests of a valuable dependency seriously affected. Now, the duty of 45*s.* remained untouched until the year 1842, when it was reduced to 25*s.*, and then they were told they were going beyond the line of prudence, because 30*s.* ought to be the lowest amount of protection retained, for otherwise a reduction to 25*s.* would annihilate the Canada trade. Had those predictions been verified; and what had been the result of reducing the duty on Baltic timber? Owing to the change which has taken place in the mode of charging the duty on timber, in 1842, it was impossible to make any very accurate comparison of the quantities imported; but some approximation to it would be attained by comparing the revenue received in 1841 with that of the year 1845. In the year 1841, before the reduction of the duty, the duty on Canadian timber was 10*s.* per load; and it produced a reve-

nue of 450,000*l.* It was quite clear that if they had made a reduction from 10*s.* to 1*s.*, if the quantity of timber had remained the same, the amount of revenue would have been 45,000*l.* In 1843, the actual duty received on Canadian timber amounted to 68,760*l.*; in 1844, to 71,069*l.*; and in 1845, to 94,862*l.*; showing that, during those three years, instead of the quantity of timber falling off, the revenue derived from Canadian timber had increased 120 per cent. There had been a reduction made from 35*s.* to 25*s.* per load on the Baltic timber, and the duty received in the year 1841 amounted to upwards of one million. In 1843, it fell to 575,000*l.*; while in 1844, it rose to 82,000*l.*; and in 1845, to 947,000*l.*; showing an increase, but not to the same extent as had taken place in respect to timber from Canada. Under those circumstances, he considered that, from the practical experience of past years, there was not any fair reason for expecting the disastrous consequences which some hon. Gentlemen seemed to apprehend. When the subject was under the consideration of a Committee of the House of Lords in 1821, what had been the proposition of that hon. House? Why, they considered it was impossible any longer to maintain the extravagant rate of protection, and recommended a reduction equivalent to the difference of freight between Baltic and Canadian timber. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had said, "I object to your policy, because the consumer will have not any benefit." If he could show, from returns relating to Canadian and Baltic timber, that, notwithstanding the greatly increased supply, the demand was so great that prices had been kept up, he would ask what would have been the effect upon railway speculations, and other pursuits of a mercantile character to which timber was generally applied, if the duty had not been previously reduced. Baltic timber never had been used in the construction of railways until the last year, because the high protective duty excluded it; but it had been used within the last twelve months, because timber of a cheaper description could not be procured for "sleepers." The noble Lord had also said the effect of the measure would be to lower the price to the producer, and that he had invoices to show that the price in Canada had fallen 2*d.* a foot, while no reduction had been made to the consumer in this country. When the hon. Member said that freights had fallen from 30*s.* to 27*s.*, he should not suppose that the difference went into the pockets of the producer of timber in Norway and Denmark. On the contrary, the purchaser in this country reaped the advantage of that reduction. The noble Lord had stated, that in consequence of the Tariff of 1842, the shipping of this country had not increased in the same proportion as that of Norway and Denmark. But the paltry increase that had taken place in the small coasting vessels of those countries was not worthy of being taken into calculation; nor could it be expected that in a trade amounting to 3,600,000 tonnage (independently of our foreign trade and the trade with Ireland), the addition, though considerable, would be as great in proportion as that of a country whose vessels were 1,000 or 2,000 at the most. The noble Lord complained that certain returns for which he had moved were not laid on the Table; but this did not arise from any disposition on the part of the Government to keep back information, but because at this period of the year it was impossible to make up returns showing the several countries from which ships came, and the amount of their tonnage respectively. Two returns had been made. One showed that the number of ships had, during the last twenty years, increased from 25.000 to upwards of 31,000. But as ships were merely the machines in which trade was carried, it would be no information to show the increase in the number of ships, without showing how they were employed. The other return, therefore, showed the extent to which these ships have been employed, by stating the number of vessels and tonnage entered inwards and outwards for a series of years. The noble Lord said, that our population had increased from 1820 to 1840 in a much greater ratio than the shipping, and that was a proof that our commerce had been falling off. But during that period such great improvements had been made in our naval architecture, that one ship now did three times the work of any of the tubs of former years. Whatever might have been the increase in the number of ships, it was quite certain that the trade of this country had rapidly progressed. The noble Lord said, the proportion of vessels coming into this country from Denmark and Norway was larger than that of ships of any other country. And why? Mr. Chapman, a very large shipowner of Liverpool, explained the reason. He was asked, "Can you ac-

count for the great preponderance of foreign ships engaged in the Baltic trade?" He answered, that there were many other trades much more profitable. The shipping interest, therefore, abandoned a great portion of that trade, that their vessels might be more profitably employed in other voyages. The exports from Denmark and Norway were bulky articles of little intrinsic value, and our shipowners did not think that they could be sufficiently remunerated in continuing in the trade. But it had been stated, that the shipowners of this country could not compete with the foreign shipowner, because he manages his ship at so much less expense. Now, what had been done by the Government already had tended greatly to diminish the expense and inconvenience to which the British shipowner was subjected. Mr. George Frederick Young, one of those who signed the petition of the shipowners, was asked what was the effect of the diminution produced by the Tariff of 1842 in the duty on the raw materials of shipbuilding; and he stated that the reduction of the duty on timber took 1*l.* per ton off the expenses of shipbuilding in London—in the port of London the expense is 16*l.* to 18*l.* per ton—and that at Sunderland, where a ship formerly cost 12*l.* per ton, it can be now built for 10*l.* per ton. That showed a reduction of one-sixth, or of 17 per cent on the cost. Mr. Chapman having been asked how far the British shipowner could compete with the foreigner, said—

"If the restrictions on the British shipowners were removed—if, for instance, we had formerly our timber and provisions on the same terms that we now have them, the foreigner would never have made the advances in shipping which he has done. If we were only but on an equality with foreigners with respect to the raw materials, I think we could cope with the ships of any nation, though we pay double the taxation."

And he went on to state—

"I think we can work our ships 30 per cent cheaper since the Tariff. We can now better afford to go to Quebec for a consignment of timber at 30s. a load, than we could at 38s. or 39s. before the Tariff."

But other measures had been introduced, which would afford the greatest possible relief to the shipowners. The duty on hemp and other articles used in shipbuilding had been repealed during the last year. The hon. Member stated, that every shipowner in this country had been in a flourishing state up to the year 1840; but, that for the next three years they were in a state of great depression. It would certainly be a matter of great surprise if during those years, when every interest in this country was in the greatest state of distress, that the shipping interest should altogether escape. But foreign competition was alleged as the reason. That was not the cause. It arose from the shipowners having in 1838 and 1839 overdone the trade, so that the increase of tonnage amounted to 300,000 or 400,000. He wished to call the attention of the House to a comparison between our own shipping and that of the greatest commercial navy in the world next to our own—he alluded to the United States. In the year 1845, the tonnage of British ships, independent of those engaged in the foreign trade and the trade with Ireland amounted to 3,669,000. The tonnage belonging to the United States, entered into this country in the last year, was only 448,000. When he looked to what was the state of trade in the ports of the United States, he found that in 1828 the British tonnage entered there amounted to 98,000 tons; and in that year the American tonnage amounted to 868,000, being almost nine times the amount of the British tonnage. Now, what was the proportion of the tonnage in 1844? In that year the American tonnage was 1,977,000, whereas the British tonnage entering the American ports had increased from 98,000 tons to 776,000 tons, being an increase of nearly ninefold. There was, therefore, no reason whatever for apprehending that either the number of our ships or the efficiency of our commercial marine had been at all injured by the measures that had been adopted either in 1842 or in 1824. These details might appear to many Gentlemen to be uninteresting; but he hoped he might be excused for stating such arguments as would assist the House in forming a judgment on the question before it. It had been stated, that in 1824 the Parliament had erred, and that now the Government were taking another step in a wrong direction, and going to do that which would be highly mischievous to our trade. His object was to show that the measures taken in 1824, and by his right hon. Friend in 1842, were, so far from being prejudicial, of the greatest advantage to the trade and commerce of the country. The returns before the House showed that trade had regularly progressed and flourished in consequence of those measures. One of those returns gave the amount of the foreign trade of the port of

London in 1836—the first year in which the return was made, but a year of great excitement and speculation, and, therefore, one which might fairly be adduced as a specimen—the British tonnage entering the port of London in that year was 772,000 tons, and the foreign tonnage amounted to 255,000 tons, being in the proportion of one to three. In 1844 the British tonnage had increased to 1,800,000 tons, and the foreign 383,000 tons. The same thing would appear if they went to the port of Liverpool. The year 1845, which the noble Lord complained, had been the only year quoted by his right hon. Friend (Sir Robert Peel), exhibited an increase not above the year 1842 only, but above any of the most prosperous years ever known in the port of Liverpool. The number of vessels which entered the port of Liverpool from Canada, laden with Canadian timber in 1839 was 339, their tonnage being 170,000. This was the largest amount of ships entered during the existence of the high duties on foreign timber. He would take the two years since the reduction of the duty. In 1844, the number of ships entering the port of Liverpool from Canada with timber was 369, and the tonnage was 189,000 tons; in 1845, the number of ships was 453, and the amount of tonnage 239,000, being one third more than in the year 1839. He thought these facts completely made out this proposition, that since the reduction of the duty in 1842, the importation of Canadian timber into this country had increased in proportion to the increased quantity of timber brought from the Baltic; and it further proved the soundness of the policy of reducing the duty on the importation of this important article, and that that reduction had not been brought about in a rash manner, or in any way that could injure the interests of our Canadian Colonies, but that we had still preserved a discriminating duty in favour of Canadian timber of upwards of 20 per cent. The timber trade of the Colonies, therefore, would receive no injury, and a great benefit would be obtained by the consumer. The amount of British tonnage had increased as well as the number of ships year by year since the changes in 1842, by which, on the evidence of the shipowners themselves, it was shown that they were able to navigate their ships 30 per cent cheaper than before. With the statement of these facts, he should leave the decision of the question in the hands of the House.

MR. C. BULLER: Sir, I think I may ask the indulgence of the House while I make a few remarks on this question; inasmuch as I believe I am almost the only Member that has not taken part in this free-trade debate. I felt myself so incompetent to deal with these commercial and financial questions, that I thought I might leave them in better hands; but from what I have heard of the debate, and from what I have read in the reports, I think I understood them quite as well as some others. From the circumstances in which I am placed in relation to Canada, and the great interest I have always taken in colonial questions, I am induced to trouble the House with a few remarks upon the bearings of this question on colonial policy—the rest of it, I think, has been triumphantly disposed of. Before, however, I enter upon the discussion of the manner in which the noble Lord has treated this question as regards colonial policy, I will say just five words upon the mode in which he has dealt with it as bearing upon foreign policy. When the noble Lord unfurled the union-jack of the protection party, he might have recollected the altered position in which he now stands, as the leader of a great, and, as he says, a patriotic party, and have assumed some of the gravity and prudence which ought to belong to the leader of a great party. I much more admire the tone, as regards our foreign policy, which has been adopted by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, and the noble Lord with whom I usually act; and, however the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) may disprove of the course they have taken, I think it would have been far wiser, instead of attacking the American Senate and the Royal Family of France, to have followed the example of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, who, on this subject, generally maintains a dignified silence, but who, when compelled to say anything, always uses the language of dignified courtesy; and who, in order to prevent war, has laid the foundations of peace by an extension of our commercial relations with those countries. I say it is far wiser so to act, than to get up bandying bombast with the braggarts of the American Congress; and almost justifying the vagaries of Mr. Adams, by adopting a tone of congenial bluster. I did venture, by a cheer and a shake of the head, to express my dissent, when the noble Lord said that the policy of the Government is causing, in the Canadas, the discussion of the propriety of

throwing off their allegiance to this country, and annexing themselves to the United States. They! Whom does the word "they" mean? What are the organs of public opinion from which these facts are derived? When the noble Lord says that nothing is talked of but this annexation—[Lord G. BENTINCK: In Canada West]—I am coming to that. I suppose it was my cheer which induced the noble Lord to produce his authority, and he read an extract from a Montreal paper, which in the most violent language talked of throwing off the allegiance of Canada to this country. It happens that by the same post I have received a copy of the *Montreal Post*, which is a decided opponent of the Government; and how is the indignation of all Canada vented in that journal? Why, it is stated that the subject is so important that they must take a week to think it over. The noble Lord does not know so much of Canada and the Canadian press as I do. I believe in the last twenty years there has been no occasion on which the Government has bestowed on office on a member of any party, but the organs of the opposite party cried out that this was the proper time to throw off allegiance to this country; but this sort of bluster always ended in nothing, as I believe it will now: and those who have used this violent language, when a call is made upon their patriotism, will rally round the Government in the defence of their country. I think the right hon. Baronet and the Government, since he has been in office, have taken the best security against defection by binding Canada to this country by ties of common interest and affection; by sending out such men as Sir Charles Bagot and Lord Metcalfe to govern; and by carrying out this course of policy all dissensions have been allayed, and civil war has been changed into mere squabbles of party; and more has been done than could have been effected by all the monopolies of a restrictive system. The noble Lord says that great indignation is felt at these measures in Canada West: why, that is the stupidest thing I ever heard, for Canada West has an uncommonly small interest in the question—it is a question of geography. [Lord G. BENTINCK: Corn.] I am coming to corn presently. Where does the timber come from? Why it comes entirely from Canada East. With the exception of the right bank of the Ottawa River, the province of Canada West has no interest in the timber trade. In a despatch from Lord Sydenham, dated at Kingston, in Canada West, he says, "as for the timber trade, there is not a soul west of this town who has any interest in it." Where are the indications of the interest of Canada in this monopoly? When the former changes were in progress, I admit petitions against them were sent over; but was there any address from the Parliament of Canada West, praying that this interest might be kept up? But the Parliament of Canada East passed a resolution stating that they were ready to give up the monopoly of timber, if Great Britain would would give them free trade in corn. Why did they take this tone? Was it out of spite to any other portion of the community? No: it was because every man of sense in the country was of opinion that nothing ever did them worse service than protection. In the first place, the shipping trade of Canada was a scandal to that trade. Old and worn-out vessels were sent out imperfectly manned, and with a most disorderly set of seamen; and there were more shipwrecks in that portion of the trade than in all the rest of it. What was the effect produced in Canada? Did the merchants make large fortunes? There never were so many bankruptcies in New Brunswick and Lower Canada as in the timber trade; and that is the consequence of the trade having always been in a state of uncertainty. Do you suppose that the merchants of Canada will complain of the removal of this protection? I will venture to say there is not, at the present moment, a single trade in that country which they can engage in, in which there is a smaller number of opulent merchants than in the timber trade. Well, when did this protection do good to the people or to the landowners? Why, the landowners of Lower Canada have passed resolutions against the monopoly. Did it do good to the timber trade itself? You have sought, by this monopoly, to give that trade such an advantage in this market, that like all other protected trades, those who were engaged in it have retired upon the protection, and not upon their own industry. They have, consequently, lowered the character of Canada timber to such a degree, that at the present moment Canadian timber does not maintain that station in the European market which it ought to have had, if the timber merchant had used common caution and prudence and good sense, and sent only good timber to the English market. But the fact is this, that your protection has given them such a monopoly in the home market,

that they have sent here all their abominable bad timber, which many people find the effects of when they lie in bed; and they have sent all their good timber into the United States. Now, has the protection been a good thing for the population of Canada? Why, it is in evidence before all the Commissions, that one-half of the workmen there are Americans, who are induced to go over by high wages; that they are a set of lawless, dissolute persons, getting enormous wages during the season, when their services were in request, and spending those wages in drinking and debauchery during other periods. But what has been the effect of this protection upon the industry of Canada, the great industry of Canada—that is, the agricultural interest—that interest which, if protection must be given, the Legislature ought to encourage? What has been the effect upon that interest of the timber monopoly? It gave an unnatural stimulus to employment in that trade. The consequence was it drew off all the best hands from agriculture, and the real and great staple industry of the country languished, because of this absurd monopoly, by which we endeavoured to cocker up the timber trade. I ask the House whether this has not been the case? and if so, was it wise of the Imperial Legislature to endeavour to foster this trade by artificial means? I do not approve of such artificial means in any instance; but I say, never did the Legislature act so unwisely as by attempting to establish an industry of this kind, which, from its nature, depended on an article whose production proved year by year more scanty, an industry in its nature precarious, and one which has prevented proper attention being paid to the national staple interests of the country. Now I know there is a notion among some Gentlemen who advocate this protection—it is one of those ignorant notions which prevail in this country very extensively with reference to that Colony—though it is a very natural one, and one that I found to exist elsewhere—a notion that this was a sort of natural protection to the Canadian agriculturist, because his first operation in that country is to fell trees; and it is assumed that by giving him this artificial price for his timber, you the better enable him to get over the first expense of settling. Nothing could be more erroneous than this. If this protection ever did lead a Canadian to settle and clear land, it must have led him to make choice of the very worst soil for agricultural operations, because it is a matter of notoriety that wherever soft wood grows, that is the worst soil. But the truth is that you do not give even this benefit to the cultivator of the soil. All your protection does, is to give an increased price for the timber; and what is the effect? The timber-man comes in, selects one or two trees that are fit for his purpose, carries them away and leaves the rest standing, to encumber the agriculturist as much as before. That is the real truth of the case. Then, I say that this is a trade which ought not on any account to have been considered by this country as one of such an advantageous and permanent nature, that we should make any sacrifice in order to foster it. But I must also say, that feeling this, I also feel perfectly sure that from the time that the right hon. Baronet has chosen to make this experiment, there never would have been a period adopted in which the change might be made with greater safety; because, from natural causes, there is an immense impetus given to this trade at the present moment. It wants not your protection; it needs no aid from monopoly at the present moment. The demand for timber on the continent of Europe, for the railways now in progress, is such as to enable the Canadian to sell his timber without any monopoly at all. What is more—and I wish Gentlemen to attend to this fact—there is a great and permanent change taking place in the market for Canada timber; the demand for it in the United States is such that, while Canada timber lasts, it will find a much better market in the United States than at home. In the last two or three years, all the soft wood in the northern parts of the United States has been exhausted; the people in the Northern States of the Union must now go to Canada for their deals and other soft wood; and the consequence is, that nature herself has produced, without the aid of any artificial monopoly, a market in which Canada must have the monopoly—a great, and natural, and permanent market. And I say it is the greatest of all absurdities to prevent the people of England from getting cheap timber from the Baltic, in order to bring over here that timber for which the people of Canada might find a better market in the United States. And now, Sir, allow me, before I sit down—thanking the House for the patience with which they have listened to my observations on this question as it affects the Ca-

nadians—to say a few words with reference to its bearings on our own country. Sir, I look upon this question of timber as one of the greatest importance to the people of England. Every man's dwelling in this country is affected by the vote we are about to give. If you really have any care about the great mass of the people, poor and rich, you will cheerfully agree to-night to that which will give them cheaper and better materials for their dwellings. Sir, the noble Lord has been pleased to challenge me on the subject of Canadian corn. Well, the noble Lord had a right to give me the challenge; but what right had he to receive a single cheer from the patriotic Gentlemen about him? I must say, this plea which they now set up for protection to Canada corn is the strangest thing of the kind I ever heard. I see my hon. Friend the Member for Somersetshire (Mr. W. Miles) blushes at the mention of it. I recollect that, when the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) proposed the Canada Corn Bill, in 1843, he recommended it as a boon to the agriculture of the Colony; and how did the country Gentlemen come forward then? Did they support the principles they had so long professed? Did they adhere to their old motto, "Ships, Colonies, and Commerce," and say, "Oh, by all means, protect your Colonies—tax the people of England—perish our interests, so long as the interest of the Colonies is maintained?" They said no such thing. On the other hand, they said, "Corn will be so much a quarter cheaper—bread will be $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ the loaf cheaper—you are about to let in a torrent of abundance in the shape of Canadian corn—God knows how cheap they can afford it—they will perhaps grow it for nothing, and bring it across the ocean for nothing." All these terrible things they brought forward to terrify us from admitting Canada corn. Well, the Bill passed, notwithstanding their fears; and now they come forward and tell us that in little more than two years another "protected interest" has grown up again. Well, really, these "protected interests" must be of amazingly quick growth; they seem to have something of the quality of mushrooms about them, and to thrive and spread most instantaneously from the hotbed of protection. But I say it is rather too much for the hon. Gentleman to come forward in this imploring manner, and to beseech us to keep up a protection which was established but two years or two years and a half ago. I contend that this is a most impudent claim, and one which I am sure the people of Canada themselves will entirely disavow.

The House divided on the Question, that the House agree with the Committee on the said Resolution:—Ayes 232; Noes 109: Majority 123.

List of the AYES.

Acheson, Visct.
Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Antrobus, E.
Archbold, R.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baine, W.
Baird, W.
Baldwin, B.
Bannerman, A.
Barclay, D.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Baring, rt. hon. W. B.
Barnard, E. G.
Becket, W.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M. J.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Botfield, B.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowes, J.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, C.
Busfeild, W.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Clay, Sir W.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Cobden, R.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, J.
Copeland, Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Cripps, W.
Currie, R.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, E. B.
Dennistoun, J.
D'Eyncourt, rt. hn. C. T.
Dickinson, F. H.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douro, Marq. of
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, G.
Duncannon, Visct.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, Adm.
Easthope, Sir J.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, Sir P.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellice, E.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Evans, Sir De L.
Ewart, W.
Feilden, W.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Flower, Sir J.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Gibson, T. M.
Gill, T.
Gore, M.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcoat, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hogg, J. W.
Hollond, R.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Howard, Sir R.
Hughes, W. B.
Hume, J.

Humphery, Ald.
Hutt, W.
James, W.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnstone, H.
Kelly, Sir F.
Kelly, J.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Layard, Capt.
Legh, G. C.
Lockhart, A. E.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
M'Carthy, A.
M'Geachy, F. A.
M'Neill, D.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Mahon, Visct.
Mainwaring, T.
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Meynell, Capt.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitcalfe, H.
Moffatt, G.
Molesworth, Sir W.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Morison, Gen.
Muntz, G. F.
Napier, Sir C.
Neville, R.
O'Brien, J.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Ord, W.
Osborne, R.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Pechell, Capt.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Powell, C.
Price, Sir R.
Protheroe, E.
Pulsford, R.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Rumbold, C. E.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Russell, J. D. W.
Ryder, Hon. G. D.
Sandon, Visct.
Scott, R.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Sheridan, R. B.
Smith, B.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Smythe, hon. G.
Somers, J. P.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, H.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thesiger, Sir F.
Thornely, T.
Tomline, G.
Towneley, J.
Trelawny, J. S.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, hon. C.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Wall, C. B.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
White, S.
Wilde, Sir T.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Young, R.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Astell, W.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Baillie, W.
Bankes, G.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bentinck, Lord H.
Borthwick, P.
Bramston, T. W.
Brisco, M.
Broadley, H
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Lord
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bruges, W. H. L.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Campbell, Sir H.
Cayley, E. S.
Chandos, Marq. of
Cholmondeley, hon. H.
Churchill, Lord A. S.
Clifton, J. T.
Compton, H. C.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Filmer, Sir E.
Finch, G.
Fitzmaurice, hon. W.
Floyer, J.
Forbes, W.
Fox, S. L.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gooch, E. S.
Grogan, E.
Halford, Sir H.
Hall, Col.
Halsey, T. P.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinde, J. H.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Hudson, G.
Hurst, R. H.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Lennox, Lord G. H. G.
Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Maclean, D.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Maunsell, T. P.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Neeld, J.
O'Brien, A. S.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Pigot, Sir R.
Rashleigh, W.
Rendlesham, Lord
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymer, H. K.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smyth, Sir H.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Spooner, R.
Stanley, E.
Stuart, J.
Taylor, J. A.
Thompson, Ald.
Tollemache, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Turnor, C.
Tyrrell, Sir J. T.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Williams, T. P.
Worcester, Marq. of
Yorke, hon. E. T.

TELLERS.
Beresford, Major
Newdegate, C. N.

Resolution agreed to.

Bills ordered to be brought in.

TURNPIKE ROADS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. F. MAULE, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said, it would have the effect of abolishing the sale of spirituous liquors, &c., at toll bars—a practice which rendered travelling on roads unsafe as well as disagreeable.

Mr. F. M'KENZIE, although not opposed altogether to the principle of the Bill, trusted the right hon. Gentleman would not press it at so late an hour of the night, because it involved the whole of the licensing system of Scotland.

Mr. F. MAULE hoped he might be allowed to take the second reading then, and the discussion upon a future stage of the Bill.

MR. F. SCOTT also urged the postponement of the Bill.

SIR HUGH CAMPBELL begged to say, that he was entirely opposed to the principle of the measure, and he looked

upon it as an unnecessary interference with the present system; and therefore he objected to the second reading.

The House divided:—Ayes 45; Noes 13: Majority 32.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.	Hawes, B.
Antrobus, E.	Hindley, C.
Baring, H. B.	Hope, G. W.
Bentinck, Lord G.	Howard, Sir R.
Borthwick, P.	Hudson, G.
Bouverie, H. E. P.	Hughes, W. B.
Brotherton, J.	Jermyn, Earl
Bruce, Lord E.	Johnstone, H.
Buller, C.	Masterman, J.
Cardwell, E.	Osborne, R.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.	Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.	Peel, J.
Cockburn, rt. hon. Sir G.	Powell, C.
Corry, rt. hon. H.	Seymer, H. K.
Craig, W. G.	Somerville, Sir W. M.
Dalmeny, Lord	Stuart, H.
Denison, E. B.	Tufnell, H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Duncan, G.	Wawn, J. T.
Ellice, E.	Worsley, Lord
Escott, B.	Young, J.
Greene, T.	TELLERS.
Hamilton, W. J.	Maule, rt. hon. F.
Hamilton, Lord C.	March, Earl of

List of the NOES.

Baillie, W.	Rashleigh, W.
Cripps, W.	Scott, hon. F.
Dennistoun, J.	Waddington, H. S.
Forbes, W.	Wortley, hon. J. S.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.	Yorke, hon. E. T.
Lockhart, A. E.	TELLERS.
Mackenzie, T.	Mackenzie, W. F.
M'Neill, D.	Campbell, H.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 23, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª· Fever (Ireland); Insolvent Debtors (India); Consolidated Fund.

Reported. Print Works.

3ª· and passed. Fever (Ireland); Metropolitan Buildings.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Guardians of the Midleton Union, for Alteration of Poor Law (Ireland) Act in respect to the Repayment of Money advanced for the Building of Workhouses.—By Lord Denman, from William Green, now confined in the Queen's Prison, Southwark, for Alteration of Law respecting Imprisonment for Debt.—By Lord Redesdale, from Board of Guardians of the Tiverton Union, for Alteration of Poor Laws Amendment Act in regard to the Law of Settlement and Rating.—From Solicitors of East Ripon, against the Real Property Deeds Registration Bill.—From the Wardens and Society of the Mystery of the Art of the Leathersellers of the City of London, praying to be exempted from the Operation of the Charitable Trusts Bill.

STATE OF IRELAND.

EARL GREY then rose to bring forward his Motion on the State of Ireland. The noble Lord spoke nearly as follows:—My Lords, in rising to submit to your Lordships the Motion of which I have given notice, I feel that I am, in the first instance, bound to apologize to your Lordships for having taken upon myself the task of bringing under your consideration a subject of such extreme difficulty and importance, to which I am painfully conscious how little I shall be able to do justice. The only excuse I can offer for what must appear such great presumption is, that I found no other noble Lord willing to undertake a task which I thought absolutely to be performed, even though it should be by one not better qualified for it than myself. The measures that have lately been brought before your Lordships with respect to Ireland are, in my judgment, of such a character as to impose upon the House the necessity of taking the earliest opportunity, after having given its assent to them, of declaring by a solemn vote that those measures by themselves are altogether inadequate to the case of Ireland—that they cannot possibly be expected to cure the social evils by which Ireland has so long been afflicted, and that they are only to be justified upon the supposition that they are intended for nothing more than to give time for the application of other and more effectual remedies. It is the object of the Motion I am about to submit to your Lordships to call upon this House to express that opinion. I most earnestly wish the task of asking you to do so had fallen into other and worthier hands; but as that has not been the case, I have only to entreat your Lordships' indulgence for the imperfect manner in which I am aware I shall perform this duty. In bringing this subject under your Lordships' notice, unfortunately there is but little need for me to dwell upon the unhappy condition of Ireland. You have already heard too much of it on much higher authority than mine. The noble Earl opposite, in bringing forward on behalf of Her Majesty's Government the different measures that have been proposed with respect to Ireland, has disclosed to us a state of society which it is indeed awful to contemplate; a state of society in which there is no security for life or property; a state of society in which the usual wretchedness of the population has been so aggravated by the partial failure of the potato crop, that famine and pestilence must stalk through the land, unless those measures which Parliament has adopted

to counteract those evils should fortunately arrest their progress. This is the state of things described by Her Majesty's Government; and unhappily this is no accidental, no extraordinary, no unlooked-for calamity. It is but an aggravation, and perhaps no very great aggravation, of the habitual condition of Ireland. The evils of that unhappy country are not accidental, not temporary, but chronic and habitual. The state of Ireland is one which is notorious. We know the ordinary condition of that country to be one both of lawlessness and wretchedness. It is so described by every competent authority. There is not an intelligent foreigner coming to our shores, who turns his attention to the state of Ireland, but who bears back with him such a description. Ireland is the one weak place in the solid fabric of British power—Ireland is the one deep (I had almost said ineffaceable) blot upon the brightness of British honour. Ireland is our disgrace. It is the reproach, the standing disgrace, of this country, that Ireland remains in the condition she is. It is so regarded throughout the whole civilized world. To ourselves we may palliate it if we will, and disguise the truth; but we cannot conceal it from others. There is not, as I have said, a foreigner —no matter whence he comes, be it from France, Russia, Germany, or America— there is no native of any foreign country different as their forms of government may be, who visits Ireland, and who on his return does not congratulate himself that he sees nothing comparable with the condition of that country at home. If such be the state of things, how then does it arise, and what is its cause? My Lords, it is only by misgovernment that such evils could have been produced: the mere fact that Ireland is in so deplorable and wretched a condition saves whole volumes of argument, and is of itself a complete and irrefutable proof of the misgovernment to which she has been subjected. Nor can we lay to our souls the "flattering unction" that this misgovernment was only of ancient date, and has not been our doing. It is not enough in our own excuse to say, "No wonder this state of things exists: the Government of Ireland before the Union was the most ingeniously bad that was ever contrived in the face of the world; it was the Government of a corrupt minority, sustained by the superior power of this great country in oppressing and tyrannizing over the great body of the nation; such a system of government could not fail to leave behind it a train of fearful evils from which we are still suffering at the present day." To a certain extent, no doubt, this is true. No man has a stronger opinion than I regarding the iniquitous system of misgovernment in Ireland prior to the Union. But the Union is not an event of yesterday. It is nearly half a century since that measure passed. For nearly fifty years, now, Ireland has been under the immediate control of the Imperial Parliament. Since it has been so, a whole generation has grown up, and is now passing away to be replaced by another; and in that time, I ask you, what impression has been made upon the evils of Ireland? It is true some good has been done. I gladly acknowledge that many useful measures have been adopted, which have, I hope, contributed in some respects to the improvement of Ireland; but none of these measures have gone to the root of the social disease to which Ireland is a prey; in the worst symptoms of which no amelioration whatever can be observed: the wretchedness and misery of the population have experienced no abatement. Upon that point I can quote high authority. I find that the Commission presided over by a noble Earl, whom I do not now see in his place (the Earl of Devon), reported the year before last, that "improvement was indeed beginning to take place in agriculture; but there had been no corresponding advance in the condition and comforts of the labouring classes." By the Report of that Commission we are informed, that the agricultural labourers are still suffering the greatest privations and hardships, and still depend upon casual and precarious employment for their subsistence; that they are badly fed, badly clothed, badly housed, and badly paid for their labour; and the Commissioners conclude this part of their Report by saying—

> "We cannot forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have generally exhibited under sufferings greater, we believe, than the people of any other country have ever endured."

This is an authentic statement, and comes from a Commission appointed only the other day to inquire into the state of the people of Ireland. It is a Report describing the state of things in that country before the failure of the potato crop, and the Commissioners tell you that the sufferings of the great mass of the people of that country are greater than those of

the population of any other country in Europe. This is indeed a fearful statement, coming from such authority. But there is another symptom of the condition of Ireland, which seems to me even more alarming than the prevalence of distress—I mean the the general alienation of the whole mass of the nation from the institutions under which they live, and the existence in their minds of a strong deep feeling of hostility to the form of government under which they are placed. This feeling, which is the worst feature in the case, seems to be rather gaining strength than to be diminishing. I am led to that opinion by what I heard two years ago fall from the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the House of Commons. I heard that right hon. Gentleman—and it was a statement which made a deep impression upon me—I heard the right hon. Gentleman, in answer to a speech made by a noble Friend of mine, distinctly admit that we had military occupation of Ireland, but that in no other sense could it be said to be governed; that it was occupied by troops, not governed like England. Such was the admission of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. And now, my Lords, I ask you, is that a state of things which ought to continue? And I ask is not such a state of things, so clearly established by authorities so high and indisputable, a good ground for inferring that there is something wrong in the policy which has been hitherto pursued towards Ireland; and that some measures different in character, and more effectual than those we have been in the habit of trusting to, are necessary to meet the exigency? That is the only inference which appears to me to follow from the premises universally admitted. I cannot understand how any man with the use of his reason could arrive at a different conclusion. I say, then, some change is absolutely necessary; we are bound to endeavour to apply some remedy to the evils of Ireland more efficient than any which have yet been attempted. This necessity, however, does not appear to be recognised by Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government propose only to go on with measures such as those we have tried over and over again—measures which have allowed all the evils of Ireland to go on, as I have shown, and rather to get worse than better. They propose doggedly to pursue the old and beaten track. How, then, can they expect that it should lead to any but the accustomed termination? Two words, "money" and "coercion," seem to describe the whole policy of the Government. We have never been sparing of either: both have been tried over and over again; and we see in the state of Ireland the most convincing proof that by themselves they hold out no hope of success. Shall I be told, then, that improvement in that country is impracticable—that the causes of the unhappy condition of Ireland are either undiscoverable, or else of such a nature as to be beyond our power to cure them? Such an assertion, I should say, is a libel at once upon Providence and upon human nature. I, for my part, utterly disbelieve in the possibility of such a state of things existing in any country, unless through great faults on the part of the rulers. Is there anything in the nature of Ireland or of her people that can warrant a different view of the case? Undoubtedly not. So far as regards the nature of the country, Ireland has been gifted by Providence with a soil of surpassing fertility, with great mineral wealth, with a climate mild and genial. In her large extent of coast and numerous harbours—her great natural facilities for internal navigation—in her command of water power, she has great natural resources, and every requisite for commercial greatness. The natural resources of Ireland are not only great, but unusually great. Then, as to her people. When they are removed from Ireland—when they are taken away from the pernicious influences by which they seem there to be surrounded, the men of Ireland have shown themselves capable of everything that is good and great. We see them in our Colonies—we see them in America, in various countries of Europe, distinguishing themselves in every pursuit of industry, and every branch of art. So little is it true that they are incapable of regular industry, that in this country many of the employments imposing the severest labour are chiefly in their hands. In the county with which I am connected, we have been in the habit of seeing every year large numbers of Irishmen come over as reapers during harvest, many of them from Donegal, and other districts, where the greatest wretchedness and misery prevail. What is the character of those men? We have always found them grateful beyond measure for good treatment; tractable, industrious, cheerful, and gay—in some respects, no doubt, thoughtless, and easily excited; but, on the other hand, exhibiting,

upon the whole, a degree of prudence and forethought not often seen in men of their rank in life and amount of education—living in the most economical manner when in work, and saving their hard earnings in order that they may pay their rents when they get home. This is the character of the people of Ireland in England; and I say with such a people and such a country, is it not clear that the fault must be with their rulers if lawlessness and wretchedness prevail amongst them? My Lords, I cannot doubt it to be so, and therefore I never can for a moment believe in its being impossible for Parliament to interfere with effect to improve the condition of Ireland. I am not, indeed, such a visionary as to expect that evils of such long standing, and so inveterate, can be removed in a moment. I know too well that this is utterly impossible; but of this I am persuaded, that if we will seriously, and with earnestness and singleness of purpose, apply ourselves to that great task—if, without regard to preconceived opinions or dearly cherished prejudices, we will honestly and fairly set ourselves to find out and to do what can be done for the benefit of Ireland, we shall discover measures, the adoption of which will soon give evidence by their happy effect that we are on the right track, and on the road to improvement, and which will, in due time, leave Ireland for generations to follow us in the condition of a prosperous, happy, well-ordered community. I say this is in our power if we do our duty; if Parliament discharges as it ought the great task devolved upon it, we may safely rely in humble confidence on the blessing of Providence on our honest endeavours. The fault which I am disposed to find with the measures of Her Majesty's Government lies much more in what they do not do, than in what they do; it is much more that their measures are inadequate, than that they are altogether erroneous in themselves. I think the objects which Her Majesty's Government have in view are good objects; I find fault with the means they propose to adopt. I think those means are insufficient, and in some particular points ill adapted to the end they have in view. If I rightly comprehend the policy of the Government, it is this. They consider that the great evils of Ireland are, first, the absence of security for life and property; and next, the absence of due encouragement for industry, and of a sufficient demand for honest labour at adequate wages. I conceive these are the two great points to which the efforts of Government are directed; they wish to increase employment, they wish to promote security; and they consider that these two evils are closely and intimately connected together. I have no doubt that so far Government are perfectly right. I think it is impossible attentively to consider the state of Ireland without seeing how very closely these two symptoms in her condition, if I may so call them, are connected together—so closely, that it is really almost difficult to say which is cause and which is effect. If we look to the natural resources of Ireland, and the means she has of rewarding industry, if duly applied, I am tempted to say that nothing but the want of security can account for the fact that her natural resources have not been better developed, and that there industry is not better rewarded. On the other hand, if you look to the wretchedness and poverty of the people—their entire dependence for subsistence on the land—and the manner in which predial outrages are connected with their dread of losing their only certain means of subsistence—it seems impossible to deny that poverty and wretchedness have much to do with the existing insecurity of life and property. Each of these evils tend to aggravate the other; and I believe no remedy you can attempt to apply to the situation of Ireland will be effective, unless you, at one and the same time, apply yourselves to both giving employment to the people, and correcting that insecurity which prevents private capital from affording employment. These are the objects which I understand Government to have in view, and so far I think them perfectly right. I think, also, that what they do with a view to remedy the immediate and pressing want of employment is right in itself and sufficient. In that respect it might probably be difficult to do more than Government purposes. I believe that the measures they have adopted by grants and loans, for providing artificially, if I may say so, extended employment to meet the present distress of Ireland, are, on the whole judicious and well considered. I have no fault whatever to find with those measures, either as to their nature or adequacy, so far as they go; in this respect it would, I believe, be difficult to do more. But we must never forget, in assenting to measures of this description, that the permanent employment of the people must, after all, be the result of the spontaneous operation of private enterprise

and private capital. No country can be in a wholesome condition where the population depend for employment on measures artificially brought forward by the Government. As a temporary resource to meet the immediate and pressing want that exists, I admit it is quite proper that such measures should be attempted; but when we are looking to the permanent improvement of the country, to that which is to be its habitual condition, then I say that employment directly afforded at the cost and under the superintendence of Government, is utterly and entirely inadequate. It will accomplish no real improvement, unless, while we provide that temporary and artificial employment, we encourage private capital and enterprise to step in and take up the work of providing natural and permanent employment. But we cannot expect this to happen; we cannot expect to see private industry and enterprise flourishing and prosperous, until peace and security are established on some better foundation than laws arming the Executive Government with almost arbitrary power. It is utterly impossible, if quiet is only maintained in Ireland by laws of this description, that private industry and enterprise can take root in that country. The very existence of those laws, even if they have the effect of repressing outrage and preventing the commission of crime, prevents that feeling of security in the minds of men which is no less essential for commercial and industrial improvement than actual safety. Such laws also interfere with that liberty of action which is the very lifeblood of commercial enterprise. Do you suppose that men can embark in great enterprises of industry and commerce where they cannot venture outside their own houses after dark, unless at the risk of being transported? It is utterly impossible. Until you can establish security on some better foundation, and make it compatible with a return to the ordinary law and constitution, restricting the Executive Government to its constitutional powers—till you can do that, you have done nothing. And this it is which accounts for the failure of your past liberality to Ireland in the way of public works; for do not flatter yourselves that you are doing anything new by making grants and loans for public works. Since the Union, enormous sums have been contributed in this manner; and what has been the result? I am afraid that no inconsiderable proportion of the money has been jobbed away in extravagant expenditure. But I hope that of late years this has been the case to a far less extent; and that a large proportion of the money has been well and usefully applied. Still, what is the result? You have executed considerable public works; as far as they go they are useful; but they have failed in giving that impetus you expected to private industry and enterprise; they have failed in calling into activity the internal resources of Ireland. The reason of that failure is, in my opinion, obvious; it is because you have not yet succeeded in establishing security, together with the restriction of the Executive Government to the ordinary powers of the law. I say, therefore, that one great object your Lordships ought to have in view is to establish good order on an effective basis, and under mild enactments, without having recourse to temporary laws of this severe and arbitrary character. Then I come to the inquiry—is there anything in the measures of Government which can give us a hope that they will be attended with this result? Is there anything in what they propose to us which we can even expect will have the effect of re-establishing order without the necessity of strong powers being entrusted to the Executive? It is with deep concern I am obliged to say, I know of nothing they have done, or intend to do, which holds out to us any such prospect. In those measures I can see nothing which gives even the faintest hope that when the temporary Bill lately passed by your Lordships shall have received the sanction of the Legislature, and shall have run its term—I see nothing that can give us hope that, in October, 1849, we shall have peace and security without a renewal of measures of so arbitrary and despotic a character. What, my Lords, is the cause of its being so often necessary in Ireland to have recourse to laws of this sort? Why is it that the ordinary law is in that island utterly powerless to protect the peaceable subject, and to maintain good order? I believe every person who has at all attended to the situation of Ireland will at once say that the reason for this is, that, unhappily, the whole body of the population are adverse to the administration of the law. In a well-ordered community, the law, I may say, is self enforced. It is not merely the officers of Government—not merely those who are specially employed in administering the law and maintaining good order, who are

peace officers, but every member of the community. Here, if there is an infringement of the law, every man, however humble, is ready to join in repressing it. In Ireland, on the contrary, the population is everywhere united in a general combination to resist and thwart the endeavours of those whose duty it is to enforce the law. Compare what happens in England and Ireland, when some great crime has been committed. In this country, if a murder has been committed, and the culprit has escaped, and is known, he can hide himself nowhere: every one is on the alert to assist in the detection of the murderer; the newspapers carry his description to the remotest corners; wherever he goes, a hundred jealous eyes are scrutinizing every unknown face; every stranger to whom the slightest suspicion attaches is at once stopped, and brought before a magistrate; and it seldom happens that among those stopped the real culprit does not fall into the hands of justice. But what happens in Ireland? When a murder is committed, the population do not interfere to seize the murderer and bring him to justice: on the contrary, their sole object is to screen and protect him. The greatest disgrace which can attach to an Irish peasant, in the eyes of his fellows, is to be supposed to have given the slightest assistance, directly or indirectly, to the enforcement of the law. The character of an informer is one which it is worth as much as a man's life to acquire. And what is the Irish definition of an informer? It is not what we mean in England. Here, when we speak against an informer as an odious character, we mean a man who for the gain of the penalty goes and lays an information against a person guilty of an infraction of the law, very often one of a perfectly venial and insignificant description. In England, an informer is thus a man who endeavours to get a not very creditable livelihood by the faults or offences of his neighbours. But in Ireland an informer is any man who dares to give information of any kind as to the commission of a crime. We were told the other night by a noble Earl opposite (the Earl of St. Germans) that this danger from giving evidence applied even to the son or wife of a man inhumanly murdered, of a man who might have been dragged out of his bed in the dead of night, and barbarously murdered by a band of hired assassins. Though it may be the wife, son, or brother of the victim who ventures to tell what he knows, and to describe the persons, or give the names of the criminals, yet the party venturing to do this, is, in the Irish definition of the term, an informer; and though a person labour under the strongest provocation, he cannot give evidence without consequent risk to life and limb—so much so, that I believe it has been the practice in Ireland in former years, and probably it has not yet been quite discontinued, that when a man gives evidence on the part of the Crown, in cases of murder or some other atrocious crime, and when the verdict of the jury has been obtained, the Crown is obliged to defray the expense of enabling the man to emigrate to the Colonies, because his life is in danger. This is the real reason of the difficulty of enforcing the law in Ireland. It is because the great body of the people are banded to resist it, and instead of co-operating with the administrators of the law, they only endeavour to screen and assist those who violate it. Their sympathy is not with the murdered, but with the murderer; and so far is this carried, that the murderer is actually a privileged character in Ireland. In favour of the murderer, even that jealousy of a stranger coming into a district to which he does not belong to seek for work, which is generally so strong, is suspended; and I believe there are well-authenticated instances of men, wishing to find employment at a distance from their native districts, actually pretending to have committed a murder, and to be trying to escape the search of the officers of the law, in order that they might be permitted, unmolested by the population, to seek for work in a district to which they did not belong. If I am not much mistaken, I have heard a former Secretary for Ireland describe well-authenticated instances of this kind as having existed. My Lords, I think it is sufficiently established that the temper and disposition of the people in Ireland is not to assist, but to thwart, the administration of the law. Until that temper is altered, it is in vain to multiply Coercion Bills; it is quite impossible that by such means you can establish real security. The object must be to change their disposition. I ask you, my Lords, has the Coercion Bill any tendency to do so? Are the severe provisions which we are compelled to adopt when endeavouring to repress crime, while the population continue animated by the spirit I have endeavoured to describe—are those severe provisions calculated to reconcile the people to the law, and bring them to look upon its

ministers as their friends instead of their enemies? I think no man will maintain such a proposition. It is a resource too much like the dram of the drunkard, in the fits of intolerable depression which succeed his excesses. He knows that a fresh excess will give him temporary relief, and to that temporary relief he flies, though it is certain to be followed by a return, with increased severity, of all his painful sensations. I believe the effects of these severe laws are precisely of the same sort. They may repress, perhaps, for a moment, the commission of crime; but they have no tendency to take away the spirit which really creates the difficulty of efficiently administering the law without extraordinary powers. This is the conclusion as to the effect which these coercive measures are calculated to produce, to which I think we should be led by reasoning on the subject; but it is also confirmed by experience. Have not measures of severity been tried long enough, and without much reserve as to the degree of severity employed? I find in a speech made by the right hon. Gentleman now at the head of the Government, so long ago as 1829, in introducing to the House the measure he then proposed for the relief of the Roman Catholics from civil disabilities, that he gave this history of the measures of severity which had then been adopted in Ireland:—

"In 1800, we find the Habeas Corpus Act suspended, and the Act for the Suppression of Rebellion in force. In 1801 they were continued. In 1802, I believe they expired. In 1803, the insurrection for which Emmett suffered broke out. Lord Kilwarden was murdered by a savage mob; and both Acts of Parliament were renewed. In 1804 they were continued. In 1806 the west and south of Ireland were in a state of insubordination, which was with difficulty repressed by the severest enforcement of the ordinary law. In 1807, in consequence chiefly of the disorders that had prevailed in 1806, the Act called the Insurrection Act was introduced. It gave power to the Lord Lieutenant to place any district by proclamation out of the pale of the ordinary law—it suspended trial by jury—and made it a transportable offence to be out of doors from sunset to sunrise. In 1807 this Act continued in force, and in 1808, 1809, and to the close of the Session of 1810. In 1814, the Insurrection Act was renewed; it was continued in 1815, 1816, and 1817. In 1822 it was again revived, and continued during the years 1823, 1824, and 1825. In 1825, the temporary Act intended for the suppression of dangerous associations, and especially the Roman Catholic Association, was passed. It continued during 1826 and 1827, and expired in 1828. The year 1829 has arrived, and with it the demand for a new Act to suppress the Roman Catholic Association."

My Lords, I might continue this painful history. Only four years after the time when the right hon. Gentleman the present First Minister thus spoke, it was again found necessary to introduce a measure of the severest kind, which in the greater part of its provisions was renewed in the year 1834, and expired, I think, only four or five years ago. Again, in the year 1846, we are called upon to renew it. Such, my Lords, is the result which experience shows to have been obtained by mere severity. Such is the prospect we have, if we confine our efforts to merely repressing, by stern and rigorous measures, the commission of crime — such is the prospect we have of restoring real security to Ireland. I contend, then, that we must look further; we must look to the root of the evil, and we must see whether it is not possible to change the temper of the Irish population, to effect a reconciliation between them and their rulers, to make them the friends instead of the opponents of the administrators of the law. This, I say, is the object to which our efforts ought to be directed; and I say, if those efforts are honestly directed to its accomplishment, I believe it is one not beyond our reach to attain. It is true, the task is a most difficult one. You have to erase from the minds of the Irish people the deep impression left by long ages of misgovernment, and to convince them that their rulers have both the will and the power to serve them, and to promote their happiness and prosperity. This is what you have to accomplish; and I shall endeavour to show what to that end should be the nature of the means employed. In the first place, then, in order to convince the people that the law really exists for their benefit, you must amend it, both in its provisions and its administration, for I believe both are defective. I am persuaded that the law as it now exists in Ireland is inadequate to secure to the poor man, who cannot afford the cost of litigation, that justice to which he has a right. I believe it is more particularly so inadequate in those parts of the law which relate to the tenure of real property. This is a subject of extreme difficulty and extreme importance, owing to the state of society in Ireland. As has been observed very recently by the Minister of the Crown who is more particularly responsible for the peace of Ireland, the Home Secretary, the state of the law, and the opinions of the people in respect to the tenancy and occupation of land, are at the root of the disorders by which the country is afflicted. I believe that the law as it

now exists requires, and is susceptible of, improvement. I believe that the most frightful injustice can and does take place under it. I think it was only the other night a noble Marquess, not now present, asked my noble Friend the noble Earl (the Earl of St. Germans) opposite, whether Government had received any information as to the truth of certain circumstances stated to have taken place in one of the western counties of Ireland—Roscommon—a statement than which, if true, no man can conceive anything more horrible—three or four hundred families being driven from the homes they had occupied for years, absolutely without resource, and left to starve or perish. I trust that statement was incorrect; I hope and believe that the paragraph in the newspapers to which the noble Marquess very properly called the attention of the Government, did not state the real facts of the case; but, whether it did or not, I believe that this is undeniable, that the clearance of estates has taken place in Ireland to a great extent, and in a manner utterly impossible to reconcile to our ideas of real justice and real humanity. I think it is contrary to what every man's feeling must tell him to be right and just, that when, whether by the fault of the actual owner or his predecessor—I care not how—a large population has been suffered to grow up on a particular district of land, they should, when a lease falls in, be driven off in wretchedness and misery. That such things should be possible, I think, is a disgrace to a civilized country. We have it on the authority of the Commissioners who lately inquired into this subject, that the practice which prevails in regard to paying for permanent improvements of the land, such as draining and building—and they have, I fear, been but of small importance—is very different to that which obtains in England; the cost in Ireland being nowhere borne by the landlord, but by the tenant. We are also told that, by the law as it now stands, it happens, though I hope not very often, that when an industrious man has spent two or three years in improving a small allotment of ground, and has thus given a new value to it, depending upon it for the subsistence of himself and family, he can be, and at the pleasure of the landlord sometimes is, turned out to starve on the wide world. Can these things be? Is it possible they should exist, and not create a strong feeling of exasperation in the minds of the peasantry? Another abuse, not uncommon in Ireland, arises from the practice of subletting, which prevails in that country very extensively; it sometimes happens that when an industrious man, having a small allotment, has fairly and honestly paid for the land he occupies to his immediate superior, and that superior fails to pay the rent to his superior, the poor man who holds the plot of ground is liable to have his property seized and sold before his eyes, to satisfy the claim of the head landlord. [*A cry of* "No, no!"] My noble and learned Friend near me tells me that it is the law both in England and Ireland. It is true; but in England the practice of subletting does not prevail in this manner, and it does not work the same practical injustice as in Ireland. I say it is notorious that acts of the most cruel and dire injustice have been done under this state of the law. A noble Friend of mine told me a case which had come under his own notice, where a poor man took a small piece of land in conacre, paying 9*l.* for half an acre, on which he grew a crop of potatoes which were to afford subsistence to himself and family, probably till the succeeding crop. This rent, which here appears so extravagant, is the common price of land taken as conacre in the county of Waterford. The man had thus paid for his potatoes; but his immediate superior was in arrear to his landlord; his landlord put in a distress, seized the growing crop, which was the only dependence of the poor man and his family, and actually refused to tell the unhappy peasant, whose ripening crop was thus snatched from his possession, what was the amount for which the distress was put in. I am told the peasant committed an assault upon his keeper, for the mere purpose of bringing the case before a noble Friend of mine, in whose justice he had confidence; but who, when the case came before him, found that the state of the law was such that no redress was in his power, though it appeared to him, as it must to your Lordships, and every man of ordinary feeling, a case of the most cruel oppression and injustice. My Lords, the first step you have to take towards bringing about a better state of things in Ireland, is to correct those provisions of the existing law under which such injustice has been wrought. The subject is, I know, one of extreme difficulty and delicacy; and, I am concerned to say, I think that difficulty has been infinitely aggravated by the most unfortunate and imprudent course which Her Majesty's Government have pursued

in regard to it. At the conclusion of the Session of 1843, a Bill for establishing what has been termed fixity of tenure was brought into the other House of Parliament by Mr. Sharman Crawford. Leave was given to bring in the Bill without opposition: when it came to a second reading, in the course of the discussion which took place, the Prime Minister pointed out some obvious defects in the Bill; but at the same time stated, that the subject was one which Her Majesty's Government felt to be of great importance, and that their attention would be given to it. Upon that statement Mr. Sharman Crawford consented not to press the second reading, and the Bill was thrown out without a division. At the commencement of the following Session, Her Majesty was advised formally to announce in Her Speech from the Throne that she had thought fit to appoint a Commission for inquiring into this subject; and a few days after (on the 13th of February, 1844), in a debate in the Commons, on the Motion of Lord J. Russell, for a Committee of the whole House on the state of Ireland, the Secretary for the Home Department, adverting to the issue of the Commission, expressed his hope that before the termination of that Session it would be in the power of Her Majesty's Government to introduce some measure on the subject. I took the liberty at the time of expressing my great apprehensions that Government were taking an imprudent and unnecessary course. I said I thought the issue of such a Commission, the circumstances under which it originated, and the fact that it was formally announced in the Speech from the Throne, were calculated to create very unfounded and exaggerated expectations in the minds of the people of Ireland on a subject on which, of all others, it was most dangerous to agitate their minds by expectations not to be realized. I said at the same time, that I thought the real state of the law and its workings might have been ascertained by Government without the issue of a formal Commission; that they might have obtained all the necessary information by private consultation with the ablest lawyers of the country, and the country gentlemen who were best acquainted with the practical operation of the law; and that with such assistance a measure might have been matured and brought forward. But I further said, that for Her Majesty's Government, while in ignorance whether any improvement was practicable or not—whether they might not find the complexity of the law so great as to obstruct any improvement that would give satisfaction—to issue a Commission in the manner they had, was the most dangerous and imprudent course which it was possible for a Government to adopt, and would, I feared, be followed by very unfortunate results. That anticipation, I am sorry to say, has been more than realized: from all the information I can obtain as to what is now going on in Ireland, I believe the present great increase of agrarian outrages is in no slight degree traceable to the issue of that Commission, without its being promptly followed by the adoption of any practical measure. I believe you have created in the minds of the peasantry of that country an impression that they are to be the owners instead of the occupiers of the land. I believe that any reform you may now make will give far less satisfaction than even a much less reform would have done if effected two years sooner, with less parade, and less flourish of trumpets. I do not charge the Government with having done this wilfully—I do not charge them with the deep guilt of having endeavoured to stave off a difficult and embarrassing question by the appointment of that Commission, and by bringing forward the abortive measure founded on it, which fell to the ground without attack, because its own friends could not support it; I do not, I say, charge the Government with having been wilfully guilty of such a dereliction of their duty; but in the face of this House and of the country, I do charge them with having been guilty of the most unpardonable imprudence in the manner in which they have dealt with this subject. My Lords, I must add, that what they have done now renders the necessity of a reform of the laws affecting real property in Ireland more pressing than ever. Not a day—not an hour—ought to be lost in devising such a measure, and bringing it before Parliament. In framing that measure, you must be prepared to go to considerable lengths, and to act—not in the spirit of mere technical lawyers, but with the comprehensive views of statesmen; you must look to the principles of the public good, on which the law of real property is founded, and not to conventional and technical notions as to the practice of that law. A reform conceived in that spirit is absolutely necessary; and I trust Her Majesty's Government will do their duty, and bring some such measure forward with the least possible delay. But,

my Lords, it is not sufficient that the mere letter of the law as it affects real property in Ireland should be reformed and improved—it is not enough to amend its mere provisions. You must look to its administration also. A noble Friend of mine on the other side of the House, told me that when I quoted the saying of a great authority, that "in Ireland there was one law for the rich, and another for the poor," I had not given the whole of the sentence; and that what had really been said was, that "there is one law for the poor, and another for the rich—and both equally ill-administered." My Lords, I firmly believe that this was most true when it was said: I hope that a considerable improvement in the administration of the law has been effected of late years; but I cannot help expressing my fears that since 1841 there has been again rather a change for the worse in that respect. The information I have received leads me to apprehend that since that year the law has been so administered as to give less real confidence and satisfaction to the people of Ireland than before. One cause of this has been the nature of your appointments to the Bench. You have placed on the bench of justice eager and virulent partisans. I believe these appointments are greatly calculated to check the confidence of the Irish people in the equal adminstration of justice. I am informed also that the practice, which between 1835 and 1841 had been abolished, of excluding men from juries on account of their religion, has been to some extent revived since the latter year. I hope, if such is not the case, that the assertion will be denied, because anything more objectionable or more improper I cannot conceive. I deliberately say, my Lords, that, in my opinion, it would be less objectionable to suspend trial by jury altogether than to continue such a practice. I believe that it is better to have no jury at all than a partisan jury; and I say, if the Government have revived that practice, they have incurred a great and fearful responsibility. But a reform in the law itself, and in its adminstration, is not all that is required. You must look still further, and do much more, if you really hope for your efforts to be successful. There is another consideration that cannot be overlooked in viewing this question. I never can believe the law will be cheerfully obeyed so long as the Parliament by which it is enacted, and the Government by which it is enforced, are objects of hostility and suspicion, instead of respect and confidence. To have the law cheerfully obeyed, to make it really effective, it is indispensable that the people should look to their rulers with feelings of a very different kind. My Lords, I know that in what I am now going to argue, the general opinion is against me. We have often been told, upon what must be considered high authority, that there is no connection whatever between the agrarian outrages on the one hand, and discontent and the Repeal agitation on the other. I confess that all the consideration I have given to this matter—and I have taken much pains in considering it—have impressed on my mind a strong conviction that those who tell us so labour under a great mistake. There are, no doubt, more immediate and exciting causes of agrarian outrages; but that their prevalence is closely connected with the existence of the Repeal agitation, is, to my mind at least, a clear and obvious fact. My Lords, in the first place, there is at all events this connexion between them, that the prevalence of agitation, and the open display of a spirit of discontent, are altogether fatal to our hopes of permanent improvement from the spread of industry and manufactures. While such a state of things exists, capital will never flow into that country. Commercial industry will never take root or flourish, whilst political agitation is as rife as it has been. As, therefore, the poverty and distress of the population are admitted to be the immediate cause of agrarian outrages, and these exist in consequence of the want of employment; agitation, as it prevents the influx of that capital by which alone distress and poverty can be removed, and the want of employment supplied, clearly must be considered to be, if not the cause, at all events closely connected with the continuance of agrarian outrages. But this is not all: it seems to me you cannot expect that political discontent can prevail throughout the country without its tending to exasperate and keep alive the feeling of hostility to the law, and to those whose duty it is to enforce the law, which has been shown to be at the bottom of that dreadful state of society now existing in Ireland. The enforcement of the law is, after all, the main duty of Government: it is that by which alone it is known to the great body of the people. Do you then suppose it possible that the population should be successfully taught to hate and

despise their rulers, and at the same time should obey cheerfully the laws which it is the business of those rulers to make and to enforce? It is utterly irrational to expect such a result. If you consider for a moment the character of the disturbances which are so unhappily prevalent, you cannot fail to perceive how entirely they proceed from a feeling of hostility to the law, and to those whose duty it is to enforce the law, which it is impossible to regard as unconnected with political discontent. Those crimes—of which another has this week been added to the frightful catalogue so recently laid before your Lordships, another magistrate having been shot but a few days back, close to one of the large towns in the south of Ireland—those crimes are not, as in this country, the acts of individuals inspired by the desire of plunder, or for the gratification of passion. No! Irish crimes and outrages are of an entirely different character. They are the work of combinations and secret societies—they are the means adopted to enforce obedience to the regulations which midnight legislators think proper to make for their own objects. Is not the inference clear, when you know those crimes are committed for the purpose of enforcing obedience to certain regulations which the people think necessary to their interests—that, if the law were in harmony with the feelings of the people—if the rules laid down by it for the decision of their disputes were consistent with their ideas of justice, and were impartially and fairly applied, the people would soon learn to prefer appealing to the regular and constituted tribunals of the country rather than to those instituted by the midnight legislators, who enforce their regulations by such barbarous and sanguinary means? If you had the people with you, you would cut off the motive to those crimes. I say, my Lords, the very fact of the desperate and misguided fidelity with which the people obey their self-constituted legislators, shows the readiness there is in the Irish character to yield obedience when they can be brought to believe their rulers really do take an interest in their welfare and happiness. As Captain Rock and his officers were obeyed, so were the Repeal magistrates and Repeal judges till you put them down. Though those self-assumed magistrates had no power to enforce their decisions, so well were they obeyed, that you, my Lords, thought—and, in my opinion, rightly thought—the fact one of the very worst symptoms in the state of Ireland. Those persons were taking on themselves all that belonged to the regular Government: they were usurping the functions and the duties of the authorized Government and its officers. No doubt that was a fearful state of things; but, again, I ask you, does not the fact that they were so readily obeyed, when armed with no legal power to enforce their decisions, show that where the Irish people can be made to attach themselves, they are naturally obedient and amenable to control. Any consideration of those circumstances seems to me to lead to the inference that in order to make the law as it exists in Ireland effectual, you must gain the attachment of the people. Political agitation is the cause of discontent. Where those in whose hands authority now rests are regarded with hatred and suspicion, the law will continue to be practically powerless and inefficient; and so long as such feelings are entertained towards the Government, you cannot hope to see a well-ordered state of society. If, my Lords, I have made out this part of my case, and satisfied you that the Repeal agitation and political discontent are closely and intimately connected with the prevalence of those outrages—what conclusion are we to draw? Shall I be told by noble Lords opposite, the inference is, you ought to put down the Repeal Association, and by a series of severe laws to repress agitation and civil discontent? If this be the remedy you suggest, I hope you will remember before you adopt it that this experiment has been already tried in former times, and not, as I think, with that degree of success which should encourage us to repeat it. You can only repress agitation and the outward expression of discontent by severe laws, which are repugnant to the whole genius and spirit of our Constitution, and which must greatly interfere, if not altogether abrogate, what is so justly regarded by all Englishmen as the sacred right of publicly discussing public measures. It is only by laws of such a character you can put down agitation by force. But remember, my Lords, the unhappy tendency of laws of this kind is to alienate from your Government all the Irishmen—constituting as I hope and believe a still numerous body—who understand and value constitutional liberty, and have hitherto held aloof from the Repeal agitation. To adopt such a measure is to drive into the ranks of your opponents

such men as those; and you gain but little if you repress agitation by means which exasperate the feeling of hostility to our existing institutions, which is really dangerous, and cause it to extend to thousands not before infected by it. My Lords, I think you must look to something more effectual than such laws. You cannot gain men's hearts by force. You must win them back to you by justice. You cannot compel them to render a cheerful obedience. I know that I shall hear the answer from the noble Lords opposite that we have so often heard before. When we argue that it is necessary to win them to you, we are told it is impossible. We are assured the desires of the Irish people are set on Repeal: nothing less, it is urged, will satisfy them, and this it is impossible to grant. This, it most certainly is, my Lords, impossible to grant. There is not a Member of your Lordships' House who would be more firmly prepared to resist a Repeal of the Union than myself. But on the other hand, I am persuaded that discontent never prevails throughout a country unless there exist some good grounds for it, and unless there is some substantial foundation for it in the existence of real grievances, though the sufferers may be and often are greatly mistaken as to the nature of the evils of which they have to complain, and still more as to what is the fitting remedy. But though a people may often be in error in what they ask, and labour under a mistake as to what ought to be done, I believe it is seldom that redress of their real grievances fails to prove a remedy for their discontent. I think there is a strong proof of this in the analogous case of Scotland. Soon after the Union of that country with England there was almost as great discontent on the subject as is now prevailing in Ireland—with this difference, that it was very much more hopeful, and that the opponents of the Union were much more likely to carry their object than those who support the agitation in Ireland. The subject was taken up by a very powerful party, and brought forward in Parliament. In the year 1713, a Motion was made in your Lordships' House, for leave to bring in a Bill to dissolve the Union. How did the House deal with it? Did they reject it by such an overwhelming majority as the other House exhibited when a similar proposition was made with respect to Ireland—with such a majority as might be expected in your Lordships' House, where I believe there could not be found a noble Lord to propose it? No! they divided, and there appeared 54 Peers for the Motion, and 54 against it, the majority by which it was rejected consisting of four proxies—the proxies being 13 for, and 17 against the Motion. I say, then, the discontent existing in Scotland was encouraged by a much more rational hope of success; but the Parliament most wisely and most happily, instead of granting what was so unwisely asked, set itself to endeavour to remove the feeling of discontent in another way. Scotland was governed on a principle of equal justice with England—a just and equal Government was granted to her; and under its influence all desire for a dissolution of the Union vanished, and I believe that at the present day you would not find in Scotland one advocate for such a measure. Let us, my Lords, try the same remedy in Ireland. You cannot grant Repeal, 'tis true; but let us try the effect of legislating for Ireland as an Irish Parliament fairly representing the mass of the Irish people might be expected to do. Let the laws and measures which we adopt for Ireland be such as Ireland would adopt for herself. Let us take the wise course recommended by the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of St. David's) in the course of the debate on the Maynooth grant last year, and I am persuaded that in a few years you will see its happy result. I cannot deny to myself the satisfaction of reading to your Lordships a passage from the speech of that right rev. Prelate, which I have perused with delight and instruction:—

"I consider it as the fulfilment of a great and solemn duty. It is the fulfilment of an obligation, which I conceive we contracted when we assumed the dominion of Ireland, namely, that we would give to that country the same amount of benefit as it would have received from an independent domestic Legislature really representing the wants, the feelings, and the wishes of the Irish people, with the single exception and qualification of excluding anything which would tend to the disruption of the Union, and the dismemberment of the Empire." *

To that opinion, my Lords, I most cordially subscribe. I believe it points out to you the only means by which you can obtain real security, and by which alone you can hope to give peace and prosperity to Ireland. Let me ask you, my Lords, have you hitherto governed Ireland in this spirit? Is there any noble Lord in this House who will

* Hansard's Debates, vol. lxxxi. p. 93.

say so? I ask you, my Lords, would an Irish Parliament, fairly representing the great mass of the nation, have delayed Catholic Emancipation till 1829? Would such a Parliament have legislated as you did on the subject of corporate reform? Would it have acted as you did with reference to the registration of voters, and above all on the subject of tithes and of the Church. This is the test to which you ought to bring your acts; and if they will not stand its application, you are clearly in the wrong. And this, my Lords, brings me to that part of my subject which is, I am aware, by far the most dangerous and difficult portion of the ground on which I have to tread: I must come now to that awful and momentous question—the state of the Irish Church; and I have to ask you whether you think an Irish Parliament fairly representing the nation would have dealt as we have dealt with this question of the Church, when you recollect that until lately you refused to permit any amendment to be made in the mode of collecting tithe—that up to this moment you still persevere in devoting to the sole and exclusive benefit of a minority of the population the great endowments intended for the benefit of the whole. I am aware of the little sympathy I am likely to meet with among your Lordships in discussing this question; but I am convinced that it lies at the bottom of the whole subject. It was admitted to do so by the right hon. Secretary for the Home Department in 1844; and it meets you still at every turn in your attempts to govern and legislate for Ireland. My Lords, it is a question which cannot be avoided or eluded, which you must look fairly in the face, and be prepared to deal with if you wish to give peace to Ireland. Consider what is the real state of the Irish Church. We all know that the property which now constitutes her endowment was originally granted to the Catholic Church, for the purpose of instructing the mass of the community in the Christian faith—in that form of Christian faith in which alone they will accept instruction. But by the superior power of this country it has been diverted from that purpose, and is now applied, not to the instruction of the great body of the people, but to the instruction of a very small minority. The noble Earl opposite who was very lately Secretary for Ireland (Lord St. Germans) stated last year that the property of the Irish Church was rather better than 600,000*l.* a year, and that the whole of this vast income was applied to the exclusive benefit of between 700,000 and 800,000 persons, who were about one-eighth of the population. And the noble Duke (the Duke of Wellington) told the House, that of the 8,500,000 people, for whose benefit that magnificent endowment was intended, seven-eighths were Catholics, for whom it did nothing. But more than this, my Lords, not satisfied with that revenue, my noble Friend (Lord Monteagle) stated that there had been granted, since the Union, from the public purse, by Parliament to the Established Church, not less than 595,000*l.*

LORD MONTEAGLE: More than that.

EARL GREY: My noble Friend says the sum is much larger. Now, my Lords, in order that you may feel the real importance of these facts, you must remember that the adherents of the Irish Church consist chiefly of the wealthy classes, for whose religious instruction there exists the magnificent endowment to which I have referred; and, in addition to this, large grants have been made by Parliament. At the same time there is the Presbyterian body, about equal in numbers to the Established Church, to whom Parliament has also made large grants, although they are Dissenters quite as much as the Catholics. But to the Catholics, though they constitute the great mass of the population, and by far the poorest part of it, including in their number almost the entire peasantry of the southern part of the kingdom, to whose miserably destitute condition I have already adverted, you have given no assistance whatever: they have been compelled to build their own chapels, to pay their own clergy, and, except the miserable and paltry grant for the education of their clergy, which, at length, last year you were ashamed of, and increased, you have done no one thing to assist them. I ask your Lordships if this is a state of things which is likely to satisfy the Irish people? I beg you to reflect upon the striking contrast presented in the greater part of Ireland by the Catholic and Protestant places of worship every Sunday. To the Protestant church you may see going the Protestant landlord and one or two of his Protestant servants, where they occupy a mere corner of a well-built, well-repaired, and comfortable building, in which, for their exclusive benefit, the services are performed by a well-educated, well-paid functionary. On the other hand, on the same day, and hard by, you may see the

great mass of the population, those whose industry gives value to the property whence the tithe-rent charge is derived, those for whose benefit the magnificent endowments of the Irish Church were originally intended, but from whom they were wrested by violence and wrong—you will see these men going to a miserable, ill-repaired, insufficient chapel, inadequate to contain the numbers who throng to worship within its walls—so inadequate that one-half of the congregation are kneeling on the damp ground around the doors, while the solemn services of religion are administered within: the priest who officiates, and to whom they are indebted for all the spiritual instruction and assistance they receive, having no income or means of subsistence, but the inadequate contributions which, from their wretched poverty, they are able to spare for him. This is a spectacle which, Sunday after Sunday, and year after year, is to be seen in the south of Ireland; and is it to be thought that human nature can submit to the existence of such a state of things, and not feel it to be an injury and wrong? Is it possible that the Irish people can look at such a state of things without reflecting upon what are their real rights, and without its producing a deep and rankling sense of injustice in their minds? But that is by no means the worst part of the case: more remains behind. I firmly believe that if what I have now described had been all of which the Irish Catholics have to complain—if the Legislature had contented themselves with wresting the property from the Catholic to endow the Protestant Church, and had treated the people in other respects with common justice and common humanity in bygone times, they would never have aroused this deep sense of injustice. But that has not been the case. In spite of all the warnings that have been given, in spite of every remonstrance, the Protestant Established Church has been only known and felt by the Irish people, during more than a century and a half, as being the cause of oppression and misery to the great mass of the people. I know that I am using strong words; but I do not think them stronger than the case warrants. To begin with the tithe system. The tithe system as it existed in Ireland was, in my opinion, the most atrocious and iniquitous system of oppression that ever existed in any country. If it had been for the payment of a clergy to whom the people were as deeply attached as human nature would allow them to be, still this system would have been a yoke which the people could not possibly have borne without complaint. But it was a yoke fixed upon the Irish people for the sake of the Protestant Church; and, what was more, for fear of a small diminution of the pecuniary means of the Church, even the slightest mitigation of the evil in the means of collecting it, was refused. In the years 1787-88, the tithe system was denounced in the burning eloquence of Mr. Grattan before the Irish House of Commons. He described it as an enormous load, which no people could bear with patience: he asked for no diminution of the property of the Church; he only asked that the revenues she enjoyed should be fixed at their real legal amount, and should be collected in such a manner as to relieve the people from an intolerable oppression. This moderate demand was refused, and the refusal drew from him a speech of indignant eloquence. He described the tithe system as the great cause of discontent and disturbance, and said, "The most sanguinary laws on your Statute-book are Tithe Bills—the Whiteboy Act is a Tithe Bill—the Riot Act is a Tithe Bill." Speaking of the heads of the Church, whose resistance had mainly contributed to defeat his efforts for the relief of the people, he said, "The bishops rejected a Lease Bill, and have almost uniformly resisted every Bill which tended to the improvement of the country, if, by the remotest possibility, their body could be in the smallest degree prejudiced in the most insignificant of its least warrantable pretensions." He remonstrated with them in words which few would now be bold enough to use, but which I may quote as the words of Mr. Grattan, and told them that they legislated as if they thought that "Christ could not prevail upon earth, unless he were taken by the hand by Mammon." This was his indignant remonstrance to the heads of the Church, who prevented any reform in the tithe system. That was in 1777 and 1778, and it was not till 1822 that the monstrous system was exposed, and some partial alleviation permitted. It was not until ten years later that another measure, still very imperfect, was brought forward by the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley); and it was not till a later period still, when the people had taken the matter into their own hands, and when they had practically succeeded in refusing payment, it was only then that in the mode of collecting the revenue a real

and efficient reform was introduced. Do you think it was calculated to endear the Church of Ireland to the people, to find that their dearest interests were sacrificed to the mere pecuniary interests of the clergy which the heads of the Church, as Christians and as Christian prelates, should have taught the people by their example and their preaching to hold as of no importance when compared with the preservation of peace and concord? Was this likely to reconcile them to the original and crying injustice of the transfer of a magnificent endowment from the nation at large, to a mere section of the community? But, more than this, the safety of the Church was made the reason for enacting and maintaining the most ingenious and detestable system of oppression that ever existed. It was for the safety of the Protestant Establishment that the atrocious system of penal laws was devised and carried into effect. It was for the safety of the Church Establishment, that year after year this House rejected the measure of Catholic Emancipation up to 1829. That measure was rejected on the alleged ground that the passing of emancipation would endanger the Church. For the interest of that Church you achieved an ill-omened and disastrous triumph, when on this pretext you succeeded so long in your opposition to popular rights, and by so resisting the just claims and rights of the people, you burned into their minds, as though it were with a hot iron, a deep hatred of the Establishment. If in the year when Grattan so eloquently denounced the injustice of the Irish tithe system, the Legislature had conceded Catholic Emancipation, and substituted a better mode of collecting tithes for the oppressive laws which were so long and obstinately maintained, the Establishment might have existed for ages to come; but instead of this, the friends of the Establishment in the Legislature achieved, as I have said, an ill-omened victory, and refused all redress of the grievances so justly complained of until it was extorted from them by terror—until the continuance of oppression had created an agitation which you could no longer control—until you were obliged to yield to force what you had so long refused to justice. My Lords, it was the obstinate adherence to this policy which has, I believe, sealed the fate of the Protestant Establishment. But, my Lords, as if that were not enough, even after Emancipation, was carried, for the same reason—the same unhappy reason, the safety of the Establishment—you rendered that just measure in a great degree a dead letter. You still continued to treat the Roman Catholics with suspicion and doubt—you refused those equal rights to that part of the kingdom which you accorded to other classes of Her Majesty's subjects. In the debates on the Registration Bill—in those on the Corporation Bill (I remember them well, for I have had to answer such arguments over and over again), the ground on which the extension of English measures to Ireland was refused, by the very persons who now hold the reins of power, was still the safety of the Establishment. My Lords, can you, after having pursued such a course, wonder that the feeling is deep rooted in the minds of Irishmen that the Establishment must be altered, or there will be no such thing as content and peaceful submission to Government? We must judge of their feelings by what our own would be under the same circumstances. I have asked more than once, but in vain, a question which I will now repeat, and to which I do hope that I shall obtain an answer now, especially from the right reverend Bench; as to them I have a right to look as the representatives of the Church. What I want to know is, what would our feelings be in such a situation as that in which the Irish are placed? And is it consistent with that divine precept which is at the very foundation of our religion, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," that you should ask the Irish people to submit to that state of things which I have endeavoured, imperfectly and inadequately to describe to you, unless you can honestly say that we ourselves, if placed in a similar situation should be content to bear it? Can we say this? Let me only imagine the case our own. Suppose the relations of the two countries to each other had been reversed, and that Ireland had exceeded England in wealth, power, and strength: suppose we had been the conquered country, and that the Imperial Parliament sat in Dublin; and suppose that it insisted on maintaining an Irish Catholic Establishment here: suppose there was an endowment originally intended for the instruction of the people in the holy religion which we profess, and that that endowment had been wrested, by the superior power of an Imperial Parliament from its intended purpose, and applied to the maintenance of a Catholic Establishment where there were no Catholics, or but an insignificant number as compared

to the Protestant population of the country: suppose further, that the safety of this Establishment had been made the reason or pretence for subjecting us to ages of the direst and severest oppression; I say, suppose we stood in that situation, and I ask you how long should we submit to it? I cannot answer for others, but I can for myself—not one hour longer than I was forced to do so. To such a badge of slavery, not only being unjust in itself at the present time, but as the mark of past slavery and oppression, would I not submit one hour longer than I was compelled. My Lords, I have no doubt this is the feeling which rankles at the bottom of the Irish heart. They would be more or less than men if it were not so. I know and have heard it said, that the payment of the Protestant Church is not now the practical grievance that weighs most oppressively upon the people, and of which they most complain. This is very possible; it is not always the deepest feelings of which most is said. But if you wish to know what the feelings of the Irish people really are on this point, you must listen to their representatives. I heard almost with awe the declaration made in the calmest and coolest, and yet the most decided manner, by an hon. Friend of mine, a Catholic Member of Parliament. "If you are determined," said he, "to make no alteration as to the Irish Church, you must give up all idea of governing Ireland except by military force." I felt, if in my hon. Friend's situation, those would be my feelings, and therefore, I believed him when he stated them to be his. This is a state of things which sooner or later you must consider. My Lords, I have another authority I can quote on the subject. In the debate last year on the Maynooth grant, a right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of London) who is not now in his place, though he was here at the commencement of the evening, said—

"There could be no doubt that the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland were taught to regard the English Government as foreigners . . . . The Roman Catholic child had books put into his hands in which the English were spoken of as spoilers of his Church and usurpers, and those principles were disseminated through the breadth and length of the land by the Education Societies."*

My Lords, this was the statement of the right rev. Prelate. I firmly believe it to be strictly in accordance with the truth. But if the right rev. Prelate were himself in the situation of the Roman Catholic priesthood, would his feelings and conduct be very different from what he describes to be theirs? If, in the See of London, a Catholic Establishment had usurped those revenues which he tells us most truly are at present inadequate for the supply of Protestant religious wants, and applied them to the benefit of a Catholic clergy without congregations, or with congregations, of Catholic units where there were thousands of Protestants? If he, as a Protestant bishop, were treated as an inferior, and compelled to take a lower place in society, and to gain a precarious subsistence from an impoverished and distressed congregation, while an intrusive prelate of the rival Church was in the enjoyment of rank and affluence; if he saw his flock most inadequately provided with religious instruction, while at the same time there were ample endowments for the spread of his religion diverted to a purpose for which they were never intended, and employed to maintain in splendour the Catholic hierarchy and clergy; I want to know whether, under these circumstances, he thinks that we should have a right to expect that he as the Protestant bishop should teach the Protestant child to be well affected to the State, and to assent tamely, and with "bondman's key," to such a state of things as perfectly just and proper? I think we all of us, that know anything of human nature, or of the character of the right rev. Prelate, should expect his conduct and language to be different. I certainly should not blame him for it if it were so—far from it. I say it would be absurd to expect, while human nature remains what it is, that he under the circumstances I have supposed should rest satisfied, or teach others to be contented, with a state of things so contrary to our notions of justice. I say then you must—however it may run counter to your feelings or your long-cherished prejudices—look this state of things in the face. As the noble Duke (the Duke of Wellington) told you last Session, you must as practical legislators and statesmen deal with the fact, that a large proportion of the Irish people are Roman Catholics. The noble Duke said most truly and most forcibly, that—

"The population of Ireland numbered probably 8,500,000, of which about seven-eighths are to be considered as Roman Catholics. . . . We cannot avoid their being Roman Catholics, and we must find the means of providing them with ecclesiastics capable of administering to them the

* Hansard, vol lxxx. p. 1202.

rites of the Roman Catholic Church. It is desirable to elevate the character of those ecclesiastics."*

This argument goes a great deal farther than the endowment of Maynooth. "It is most desirable to raise the character of these ecclesiastics;" and to that end I believe it to be necessary to give them some independent means of subsistence, without an appeal for contributions to their congregations. My Lords, I have now—I feel how inadequately—described what seems to me a monstrous injustice. I do not mean to enter into particulars as to the means by which that injustice ought to be corrected. It is undoubtedly a subject of extreme difficulty. That man must have indeed overweening confidence who, without the information which no individual Member can obtain, and without the assistance essential to such a task, can say he is prepared to give even an outline of a measure which he would be prepared confidently to recommend, as calculated to be satisfactory on this subject. All I can say is this—the principle I insist on is, a perfect equality of treatment between Protestant and Catholic: that no superior measure of favour shall be shown by the State to one class over the other. What you do for one, you should also do for the rival Church. My Lords, there are various modes of arriving at this result. Some propose that the whole endowment should be taken away from the Church as existing interests fall in, and should be applied to what is called secular education. I confess I should greatly grieve if any such measure were adopted. I, for one, am no admirer of the voluntary system. I believe it to be a bad one. I believe it to be of great importance that a fund should be set apart for the maintenance of the ministers of religion, whose province it is to teach the people, in such forms as they will accept, the great truths of Christianity; therefore, I should deeply grieve if the whole endowment were taken away for secular education. But, though I am most anxious to see this property made really available for the spiritual instruction of the people, and though I should deeply grieve if the endowments of the Irish Church were diverted from this purpose, to which in my judgment it ought properly to be devoted, still even that plan I should consider to be better than the present arrangement, which, as has been justly said, combines all the disadvantages of the voluntary system with all the disadvantages of a State Church; for you have in it all the disadvantages of the voluntary system, as far as regards the want of adequate provision for the religious instruction of the body of the people, and more than all the disadvantages of an Established Church, as regards the invidious distinction involved in making such provision for only one denomination of Christians. But, on the whole, I hope we shall not see this plan carried into effect. I hope we shall not be driven to what I should consider a last alternative, only less objectionable than leaving things as they are. There is another plan, by which it has been proposed that the Roman Catholic Church should be made the Established Church of Ireland; that as the Protestant Episcopal Church is the Established Church of England, and the Presbyterian Church the Established Church of Scotland, being in each case the churches of the majority of the people, so the Roman Catholic Church, on the same principle, should be made the established church in the greater part of Ireland. That plan comes to us with high authority. It is the plan of a man whose character I admire and revere more than that of any man who has lived in our times, I mean the late Dr. Arnold; and I have no hesitation in saying that it is deeply to be regretted that that is not the arrangement in existence. I regret that the Protestant Church was ever made the Established Church of Ireland; it was a great and fatal mistake, which I wish had never been committed. But I own I have some doubt whether, in the actual state of things, we should remedy the evil by returning to a Catholic Establishment. Another proposal which was last year made by a noble Friend of mine on the other side of the House (Lord Wicklow), was to tax the landed property of Ireland for the payment of the Catholic clergy. I think that proposition perfectly just and reasonable as far as it goes, and I hope some day to see it adopted. But I think that by itself this would be insufficient, and that to make such a measure effectual, you must add to it an arrangement for taking away, as existing interests fall in, some part of the property now held by the Established Church in Ireland. I remember that, last year, a noble Lord, then in Her Majesty's Household (Lord Hardwicke), asked whether it was not true that in Ireland there were 150 parishes in which the rent-charge amounted to

* Hansard, vol. lxxx. p. 1166.

58,000*l.* for the support of the Church, and in which there was no Protestant inhabitant? I believe the answer he received confirmed substantially the accuracy of his statement. Now, my Lords, I have no hesitation in saying that this state of things cannot continue. I have no hesitation in saying that, as existing interests fell in, such portions of the superfluous property of the Protestant Church ought to be diverted to the purpose of religious instruction of such a character, and reaching them through such a channel, that the Roman Catholics would consent to avail themselves of it. I know the objection has often been made, "The Catholics now claim no assistance. The time is gone by for such a course. Some years ago they would have accepted our bounty, but they will do so no longer." I confess I am very incredulous as to these assertions. I believe that if assistance were given them in a proper manner, under suitable provisions, the distribution of the funds, and all the arrangements to be made, being committed to their own authorities, they would accept it readily. I am aware, indeed, that the country can no longer obtain all the advantages from such a measure that would have been obtained if the assistance had been given long since; for no longer, either directly or indirectly, will the Roman Catholics yield to the State the remotest control over the appointment of their clergy. Formerly, such a power would have been readily granted; but you, unluckily, lost the opportunity; and I believe it would be the height of madness, in the present state of things, to attempt to obtain such a control. I believe also the clergy would receive no assistance in the form of a direct payment of their stipends from any officers of the Government, although in 1825 they were ready to do so. But an unhappy error was committed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, who resisted the wise proposal of a noble Friend of mine (Lord F. Egerton), and prevented in that year Catholic Emancipation from being carried, coupled with the grant of a provision for their clergy. I believe, had his influence been thrown into the other scale — into the scale of justice instead of resistance—that at that time Catholic Emancipation would have been granted, and that he more than any one man is responsible for the delay. It is now too late, however, to repair the blunder that was then committed. But I still think the Roman Catholics would take a grant, if it were in the shape of a certain annual sum to be administered by Roman Catholic authority, and applicable, at their discretion, to the building of glebe houses and chapels, and also, in cases where they might think it advisable, in providing stipends for the priests of poor congregations. I believe if a measure were passed of large and generous disinterestedness, not excluding stipends to the clergy, it would soon come into operation. I shall not go farther into details which it is unnecessary now to discuss. All I ask upon this question of the Church property is, that if you endow one Church, you will endow both. But there is another matter not less important than the question of endowment. You must give the Catholic clergy an equality also in social rank and position. You must recognise the Catholic hierarchy even more distinctly than in the Catholic Bequests Bill. Let them take their proper place and station in society — that station to which, as the chief of the pastors and clergy, who as a body are distinguished for their piety and earnest promotion of the welfare of the people, they are justly entitled. I carry my view on this subject so far as to wish to see the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church take their places in this House on the Episcopal bench; and most earnestly do I wish that we had now an opportunity of obtaining the advice and assistance, on questions relating to Ireland, of those who are united to the Catholic population by such intimate ties, who could explain their feelings and their wants, and the best mode of conciliating them. That any danger can follow from admitting to your Lordships' House an equal number of Irish Roman Catholic prelates with the prelates of the Irish Church who sit here, I for one cannot imagine. It is impossible, I think, that four Roman Catholic prelates can lead away your Lordships, constituted as the majority of your Lordships' House is. I know that the policy I am now advocating for Ireland is opposed by great difficulties. I am prepared to meet with little sympathy and support from your Lordships' House. I am prepared to find that the Address to Her Majesty I am about to move, will be rejected by an overwhelming majority; but I entertain an unshaken confidence that many years will not elapse before the policy I now recommend will, in its substantial features, be adopted by Parliament, and become the law of the land. From the

time I have been in public life, I have had ample reasons for believing that every cause resting on the solid foundation of truth and justice is sure ultimately to prevail. When I first came into Parliament, nothing could be more discouraging than the state of the question of Catholic Emancipation. It seemed to have gone back instead of having progressed. A new Parliament had just been chosen which rejected the measure which a former House consented to. In 1827, the first year I sat in Parliament, nothing was more discouraging than the state of the Catholic question; but in two years the great measure of Emancipation became the law of the land. At the same time, the question of free trade, and especially free trade in corn, was looked upon as altogether hopeless. We who wished to apply to our commercial regulations the principles upon which philosophers in their closets had long been agreed, found ourselves treated as visionaries, hardly worthy of a serious answer; and if we attempted to make even a cautious approach towards giving a practical effect to our principles, we found ourselves supported by some dozen or twenty Members. Such was the state of things in 1827; and yet in the nineteen years which have since elapsed, I have lived to see the question of free trade in corn steadily, year by year, advancing, till it is now on the eve of a final settlement; for, if, unfortunately, its triumph should still be retarded, it obviously can only be so for a very short time; its ultimate fate is clear, and we are within sight of the goal. And so the doing justice to Ireland in this matter of the Irish Church, though it may be resisted for a time, will ultimately be sanctioned. I see many symptoms that such an end is approaching. I see it in the debates of last year: I have already quoted the speech of the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Wellington) last year, which goes much farther than a sanction of the Maynooth Bill. I see evidence of progress in this fact, amongst others, that those who advocate justice to Ireland undergo no change of opinion, but every now and then there are significant changes on the other side. We see hon. Members of the other House who came into Parliament with very different views, giving their adhesion to these opinions. But, above all, we know what is the tone of private conversation. I am sure all your Lordships will admit—even those who differ most from me—that the tone of private conversation is, that the Irish Church is an anomaly which should never have existed in a civilized country, and that the difficulty now is, to see how to get rid of the disadvantages of a system which should never have been created, and to carry a reform most earnestly to be desired. It is true such remarks are usually followed up by an argument that nothing can be done; we often hear such language as this: "However desirable this measure may be, yet the prejudices of the people of England, and more particularly of the people of Scotland, upon this subject, are too powerful to be overcome; and that it would be unwise to rouse them by stirring the question. I confess that to use language of this kind, and to act on such principles as these, seems to me to be unworthy of men of true courage and honesty. If a measure is right, then it is right it should be proposed, however adverse it may be to public opinion. It is only by being proposed and discussed, that public opinion can be reconciled to it. It is this conviction which has induced me now to trespass with this argument on your Lordships' attention. I must add, that to use such language as I have quoted is in the highest degree unjust towards our countrymen. I know that they have strong prejudices upon this subject; but I also know that the language of reason and justice is never addressed to them in vain. If they go wrong, it will be the fault of those who ought to direct them to go right, but fail to do so. If those whose province it is to take a lead in public affairs—those to whom the nation has learned to look up for advice and guidance where its interests are at stake—if those who stand in this high and responsible station, either from a want of discernment as to what is necessary to be done, or from a want of courage to avow unpopular opinions, and a fear of injuring their personal position by stemming the current of public feeling—if such men from such motives shrink from advocating what they ought to know to be the right course, and condescend to flatter the prejudices and passions of the people, it may be long before those prejudices are dissipated, and too late for the safety of the Empire, before the necessity of doing justice to Ireland is recognised by Parliament; and fearful will be the responsibility incurred by those to whom so fatal a postponement of what must come at last, will be attributable. But, my Lords, I would fain hope for better things. I would fain hope that the events of 1829 and 1846

may be a lesson to those upon whom so much depends, and teach them to beware of again being so blind to coming events, or so disingenuous as the result has proved them to have been in 1825 and 1841; and that they will not, for a third time, place themselves in that most painful, of all situations—that of being compelled to make a choice between betraying the vital interests of their country in a great emergency, or else incurring the just reproach of having deceived their confiding followers, and themselves carried the very measures, in resistance to which they had been the foremost and ablest champions. I hope we shall not again see so unhappy a spectacle; but that, having well considered the state of Ireland, they will apply more effective remedies than hitherto to her social evils. In the Address, which I now conclude by moving, I do not call on you to express any particular opinion as to any particular measure. I feel it would not be right in me to do so. I do not stand here with sufficient authority to give me any right to demand your decision upon such questions; but I have thought myself bound fully, fairly, and honestly to tell you my conscientious, deliberate, long-matured, and openly-avowed opinion, which I have entertained and expressed since the first moment of my entrance into public life. I have thought it my duty to do this; but in the Address I do not call on your Lordships to express any opinion as to any individual measure. If you have other remedies better calculated, let them be propounded and discussed. If convinced of their utility, I shall be most happy to support them: no effort on my part shall be wanting to give them a full and fair consideration. But this is what I call on you to do, to agree to a solemn Address to Her Majesty, expressing your conviction that Ireland cannot be left as she now is, and that something or other must be done. If the remedies I propose be wrong, let others be adopted; but we cannot, if we have the slightest regard for the best interests of the Empire, continue to palter with the state of things in that country as we have done. I am convinced that a great crisis is at hand in the history of this country and Ireland. In its present state that country cannot possibly long continue: it must get worse, or it must get better. There is one way—and I firmly believe only one way—of appeasing the Repeal agitation, of allaying discontent, of gradually restoring order and tranquillity to a most disorganized and unhappy state of society; and at the same time ensuring the security of the British Empire. There is one, and but one way of doing this, and that is not by granting the Repeal of the Union, but by following the advice of the right rev. Prelate whom I have already quoted; that you should "legislate for Ireland, as an Irish Parliament, fairly representing the wants and wishes of the country, would be expected to legislate." Adopt that plain simple principle: act upon it at once fairly, honestly, and consistently, and I am convinced you cannot go wrong. Reject it, and you will have nothing but a miserable succession, on the one hand, of destitution and wretchedness, heightened by every accidental failure of the potato crop, into absolute famine and pestilence, insufficiently warded off by the interference of Parliament, and large grants from the public purse; and, on the other, of a recurrence of outrages imperfectly repressed by severe and arbitrary laws; until at last you bring about a fearful catastrophe, fatal to the power and glory, and perhaps to the existence, of the British Empire. My Lords, this is what you have to consider; and I ask you to pledge yourselves to do what in you lies to avert the fearful result I have attempted to describe, by agreeing to the Address I now propose. The noble Lord concluded by reading the following Address:—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to submit to Her Majesty, that this House, in compliance with the recommendation in Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech from the Throne, has taken into consideration the frequency with which the crime of deliberate assassination has of late been committed in Ireland; and that we hope that the adoption of measures calculated to give increased security to life, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of so dreadful a crime, may be the result of our labours. That we have also given our sanction to the measures proposed to us for relieving the distress occasioned in that part of the United Kingdom by the loss of a large part of the potato crop of last season. That having thus attended to what appear to be the most pressing exigencies of the actual condition of Ireland, we think it right humbly to represent to Her Majesty, that Parliament has repeatedly found it necessary to make provision, by temporary measures, for difficulties with reference to that country, similar in character to those which have now demanded our attention, grants having on various occasions been made for the relief of the Irish people from the apprehended miseries of famine; and the Executive Government in Ireland having also from time to time been armed with extraordinary powers for the repression of crime. That we observe with deep concern, that the necessity which has now again

arisen for measures of this description proves that their adoption heretofore has failed in eradicating the evils against which they were directed; and that the progress which might reasonably have been hoped for, has not yet been made in remedying the social disorders of Ireland. That we are impressed with the conviction that under these circumstances, merely to grant pecuniary assistance for the relief of present distress, and to pass severe laws for the detection and punishment of crimes, cannot be considered as fulfilling the duties of the Imperial Parliament towards Ireland; but that measures ought without further delay to be adopted, for the purpose of effecting a real and permanent improvement in the condition of this part of Her Majesty's dominions. That to this end, it should be the aim of Her Majesty's Government and of Parliament, by giving to the Irish people confidence in the equal administration of justice, to obtain their co-operation in the enforcement of the law; and, by remedying real grievances, to allay the spirit of discontent to which the prevalence of outrages and violence is to be traced. That without the co-operation of the people, the enforcement of the law must ever be uncertain and unsatisfactory; and while the spirit of discontent continues to prevail, no system of repression, however severe, can be expected to prevent its breaking out from time to time in acts of outrage. That a change in the temper and disposition of the people, brought about by an improvement in the laws, and in the mode in which they are administered, is therefore required for the establishment, upon a solid foundation, of the good order and security indispensably necessary for the development of the industry of the nation, and of the improvement of its great natural resources, whereby alone the periodical recurrence of insubordination and distress can effectually be guarded against. Humbly, therefore, to assure Her Majesty that we shall be ready to co-operate with Her Majesty in the adoption of measures having for their object to allay the discontent and conciliate the affections of the Irish people, in the earnest hope that by the blessing of Divine Providence, peace and prosperity may thus be established in Ireland."

The Motion having been put,

The DUKE of WELLINGTON: My Lords, it is not my intention to follow the noble Earl through all of his able speech. Much of it is founded in fact, unfortunately; but to some of it I am enabled to give an answer. I do not think it necessary to enter into that portion of his speech which related to the nomination of a Commission by Government to inquire into the state of property in Ireland, and to the measures which have been adopted in consequence of that Commission, further than to say that I suppose the noble Earl will admit that on the occasion of that nomination my right hon. Friend in another place never stated, in proposing the Commission, that he intended in any manner to admit the justice or propriety of the Motion under consideration at the time —I mean that relating to fixity of tenure. But the part of the noble Earl's speech to which I shall confine myself is that which immediately relates to the Address he has moved. My Lords, similar addresses have been presented frequently of late. At the commencement of this and of the last Session a desire was expressed by Parliament to co-operate with Her Majesty and Her Majesty's Government in any measure which could tend to the prosperity of Ireland. But, my Lords, it is impossible for me to concur in the Address now moved, considering not only its expressions, but the speech in which the noble Earl brought it forward; a speech—the latter part in particular—which shows that he intends to found upon the Address a series of measures which must end in the extinction of the Church of England in Ireland. The noble Earl has spoken throughout, in his consideration of this part of the question, as though it were an open question—as though Parliament had done nothing on the subject—as though it were a question on which a measure could be adopted without the smallest difficulty, without any breach of former arrangements and former compacts. My Lords, if ever there was a point which was made a subject of compact by Act of Parliament, it is the maintenance of the Church of England in Ireland. It is an institution which the two Parliaments at the time of the Union resolved should be perpetual: they styled its preservation, in the article in which it was most particularly mentioned, a fundamental part of the engagement. The noble Earl says, "I do not desire you to repeal the Union; but that which I do desire of you is, that you should adopt my Address" —an Address, my Lords, which I tell you, will lead to the pulling down of the Church of England in Ireland—of depriving that Church of its possessions—and which must end in the repeal of that very Treaty of Union which the noble Lord states he is not desirous should be conceded. My Lords, the Irish Parliament was a body capable of legislating on this subject; competent to frame and agree to this Treaty. That Parliament entered on the consideration of the question under the auspices of the Government of George III. They had the power of either agreeing to or dissenting from the Act of Union; and they stipulated for the Sixth Article, by which it was provided that the two Churches of England and Ireland were to be united for ever, and to be governed by the same laws. You cannot replace the Irish nation or the

Irish Parliament in the situation in which they stood at the time that the compact was signed; and I say that you cannot depart from the compact without a positive breach of engagement. I say, then, you have not a case before you for the accomplishment of this object—you cannot make the arrangement proposed; and I therefore recommend to your Lordships not to agree to the Address moved by the noble Earl. My Lords, undoubtedly measures must be adopted calculated to benefit Ireland; and this and the other House of Parliament ought in every case to adopt measures of legislation for the benefit of Ireland, whenever the interests of that country come under consideration. And, my Lords, I must say, that Parliament has done its duty in the matter. I believe—and the noble Lord will not deny it—I believe that there never was a country which has so advanced in improvement of all description as has Ireland in the years which have elapsed since the Union. I will not go into details—others more able to do so will follow me; but it is quite remarkable that in every way—in trade, in commerce, in shipping, in revenue, in customs, in excise—in everything the increase has been enormous. True, the noble Lord said, in the early part of his speech, that foreigners who travelled in Ireland expatiated on the misery which they witnessed there. My Lords, true there are great poverty and great misery in Ireland, as there are in other countries; but yet, my Lords, in Ireland there are vast capitals and great riches. Ireland is at this moment setting an example to the world which could be imitated in very few countries in Europe—I mean that she is laying out millions at this moment in the construction of railways at the expense of private individuals. It is very true that railways are in the course of being constructed in other countries in Europe. But how? At the expense of the Government, not out of the capital of private individuals. In this country, of course, the same thing is being done as in Ireland; but, excepting these two nations, there is not in the whole world one railroad which has not been constructed, or is not in the course of being constructed, at the expense of the public treasury. Now, my Lords, I don't much care whether this capital in Ireland be the property of Irishmen, or whether it has been borrowed in this country and sent across St. George's Channel on the credit of Irishmen. If it be the property of Irishmen, as I hope it is, then that expense, my Lords, demonstrates the improvement that has taken place in that country; an improvement for which the noble Lord ought to give Parliament, and those who govern Ireland, some credit. On the other hand, if it be the property of Englishmen and sent to Ireland, at least it shows that there is some credit in Ireland, and that men have lately more confidence in the restoration and continued existence of peace than the noble Earl appears to have. My Lords, I hope they may not be disappointed; and I am sure that the Government will do all in their power that the measures which they will introduce may be calculated to give satisfaction to the country, and to ensure the public tranquillity. Now, my Lords, I must say I think there is evidence that the noble Lord is mistaken in respect to the alleged great dislike entertained by the Irish towards the English Church Establishment in Ireland. My Lords, it is a most remarkable circumstance, but it is a fact which you will become convinced of by looking through the records of Parliament, that, after the English and Irish Parliaments had been endeavouring in vain to discover a mode of enabling the Roman Catholics to testify their allegiance, they struck out of the oath of supremacy all reference to Catholic doctrines, such as transubstantiation and everything else; but that part of the oath which referred to the property of the Church, to the revenues of the Church itself, was inserted on the petitions of the Roman Catholics themselves. Those petitions, commencing in 1805, and going on from that time, in 1806 up to 1826, and so on to the period of the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, showed that the people felt no desire to deprive the Church of its property, or to injure in any manner the privileges in the possession of the Church; that all, in fact, they desired was the removal of civil disabilities, and the privilege of standing on the same footing as their fellow subjects in the eye of the law and the Government. I say, therefore, that it is not very probable that there should have arisen a total change of sentiment on that subject. In the mean time, it is very true that some people may look after the property of the Church as other men do after property of all descriptions; but if there be one thing more certain than another, it is that the insertion of the words to which I have referred, in the declarations or oaths which must, by the law of the land, be now taken by any per-

son who claims an advantage under that law; if there be anything more true than another, it is that the insertion of these words was suggested by the Roman Catholics themselves. Now, I have stated that this institution of the Church in Ireland at the time of the Union, and the maintenance of that Church, were matters of compact from which the House cannot depart. But I go further and say, that there is no one principle in the Constitution of this country in favour of the determined maintenance of which so many solemn declarations have been made, as in respect to this principle, the preservation of the Protestant Church of England in Ireland. At the coronation this principle is declared. It was declared in the Act of 1828—the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. It was declared again in 1829 in the Catholic Relief Act; and on every occasion on which any concession of privilege was made to the Roman Catholics, it was declared again. I repeat, therefore, that we have it not in our power to change this principle, so uniformly acted upon, so repeatedly declared, of preserving the Church of England in Ireland. My Lords, I go a little further; and I believe I can state other reasons against the course which the noble Earl proposes to take. I saw some years ago —three years ago—a petition from the Peers of Ireland, complaining of the discontented state of the people. They mentioned, it is true, amongst a number of causes, this very subject, the existence of a Church Establishment. But, my Lords, they mentioned other causes of discontent. They said, that the relative proportion of Members of Parliament from Ireland and from England, taking into account the populations of Ireland and of England, was not what it ought to be. Is the noble Lord prepared to concede that? With reference to the Municipal Corporation Act, they maintained that the qualification had been placed higher in Ireland than it ought to have been, or than it was in the English Corporation Reform Act, especially considering the state of property in Ireland. They maintained also that the number of Irish Roman Catholic Judges was not that which could be fairly claimed for the Irish Bench. Now, for my part, I have always understood that Judges were always selected from those most capable of performing the duties of the judicial office. I believe such is the case in this country; I believe that this is the course pursued in Ireland; and I do not know that the Irish Judges are deficient in those qualities which render the judicial character respected. These were some of the grievances stated by the noblemen in question who signed the petition from Charlemont-house. Is the noble Lord prepared to turn these grievances into an Act of Parliament? But whatever these grievances may be, I think I can show you from what has passed heretofore, that the most ample concessions on the part of Parliament will not put an end to that which is the cause of the mischief—I mean the agitation, the perpetual agitation, for Repeal of the Union, or for any other measure, whether it be the extinction of tithes, or the demolition of church rates, or whatever may be the prevailing cry of the moment—I think I can show your Lordships, from the examples of what has passed in former years, that there is no concession you can have which will not be followed by additional agitation and consequent additional discontent. My Lords, a great measure of concession was passed in 1829. What happened? The law was passed in the month of April, 1829. In the month of June, 1829, the great agitator was in the county of Clare, urging the people there to combine for repeal, and to struggle for civil, as they had struggled for religious liberty. Well, from thence he went to Dublin, and commenced there a system of agitation in the month of December, 1829, which he continued through the year 1830, and up to the month of January, 1831, under different forms and circumstances, and in different parts of the country, until at last my noble and gallant Friend the then Lord Lieutenant, and the noble Lord the then Secretary for Ireland (Lord Stanley) issued a proclamation, under the Association Act, by which they put an end to this description of agitation. But, my Lords, observe that this fresh agitation on the subject of tithes and church rates, and repeal of the Union, commenced on the very morrow of the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill. Well, my Lords, after this measure, after these proclamations, the agitation recommenced for the suppression of tithes and church rates; and it was thought expedient, and very properly in my opinion, to put an end to church rates in Ireland, and to find other means of providing for the expenses which had been formerly paid from that fund. Hardly was that change accomplished, when the agitation recommenced on tithes, and then the Government were under the necessity of introducing a Coercion Bill; and I beg to re-

fer the noble Earl to the opinion of the noble Lord who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Wellesley, a nobleman who had some knowledge of public affairs, who stated solemnly in a despatch laid on the Table of this House, that he desired that His Majesty's Government would attend particularly to the connection which he invariably found to prevail between agitation for Repeal, and for abolition of tithes, and popular discontent and agrarian outrage—that they followed each other as cause and consequence invariably. I beg your Lordships to observe this, to observe what is passing around us, and then to say whether or no you feel disposed to make the concessions called for by the noble Earl. Having this fact before your faces, and having every reason to be satisfied that the moment you make that concession, agitation will recommence for some other object, the obtaining of the properties of individuals, or any other similar purpose, you may be as well satisfied that that agitation will give fresh ground for discontent, and cause a portion of the people to commit new agrarian outrages. Well, my Lords, after the Coercion Bill of 1833, another was passed in 1834, not so stringent in its provisions, and limited to a twelvemonth's duration; and it was succeeded by a measure in 1835, which was still less efficient, but which was passed for five years, terminating in the year 1840. There was, I believe, some little cessation of agitation in 1835 and 1836, owing, it is supposed, to some political arrangements made here in London. But, my Lords, that apparent tranquillity did not last long. The agitation for Repeal was continued under different forms during 1837, 1838, 1839, and 1840, until at last in that year the meetings of great bodies—the monster meetings commenced. Those were continued through 1841, 1842, and down to November, 1843, when they were put down by proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant. My Lords, during all this time there was no want of measures of conciliation. The tithe arrangement was brought to a complete conclusion: the Tithe Bill was passed, and every measure adopted which could tend to the prosperity of Ireland—Parliament acting on all those occasions as though it were an Irish Parliament, legislating only for the benefit of the Irish people. But, my Lords, this system of agitation still continued, and monster meetings were assembled which could be got the better of at last only by military force. Such, my Lords, is the history of the effects of concession. I do not mean to say that it was not right to concede on all these points. I only ask you whether you choose to concede on this occasion—in the face of facts which no man can deny—in the face of the compact which binds you to preserve the United Church of England and Ireland in the latter country. My Lords, I will confess that I think I have not put the question of the preservation of the Church of England in Ireland on such high grounds as those on which I might have put it as a religious establishment. My Lords, we enjoy the advantage under the influence of this establishment, of possessing a people with as strong a sense of religion, and as great respect for religion, as exists in any other country in the world. We have besides the advantage of universal toleration. Every system of religion is tolerated in this country; and, above all, we have the advantage of religious peace. These are three great Christian advantages, which I think are the great objects of a religious establishment, and I entreat your Lordships not to incur the risk of losing any of them by consenting to any such measures as those proposed by the noble Earl. My Lords, it is true that though we have religious peace, there are great political differences of opinion among the different sects which exist in this country. This, my Lords, is the consequence of our political state of existence. Every separate body in this country has considerable political power, and it is the object of all these sects and classes to increase their political power: they are acting constantly under the direction of their ministers or others who may lead them; they are anxious to increase their political strength, and they enter into political contests with their rivals. But, my Lords, will the concessions which the noble Earl proposes to make, put an end to these political rivalities among these contending sects? These sects will remain, and of course these rivalities will remain, and their contests for political power will be continued; but, my Lords, I am afraid that religious peace will not remain. We shall no longer have facilities for settling such questions as the marriage question, which was brought before this House some years ago, and other questions which have arisen, and have been settled, but which cannot be settled elsewhere. Look at Germany, at France, and at Spain, and you will find that these questions cannot be settled there. But

suppose, my Lords, you can secure religious peace; what becomes of toleration under this Catholic establishment, without which, I say, that this country could not go on for a moment? Under these circumstances, considering that you are bound by a compact to maintain in Ireland the United Church of England and Ireland, considering the great religious Christian advantages you derive from the existence of the Church of England—advantages enjoyed by the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians equally with ourselves—I entreat your Lordships, by your rejection of this address, to avoid giving ground for your belief that you have any intention to adopt the measure suggested by the noble Earl.

EARL FORTESCUE said, that the noble Duke had based his opposition to the Motion rather on the arguments of the noble Earl, than on the terms of the Address itself, or on the occasion on which it was brought forward. He must say for himself that it was because he concurred with the views which his noble Friend the noble Earl had expressed, that he gave his support to his Motion. He had given a hesitating and reluctant assent to the third reading of an arbitrary measure which had lately passed their Lordships' House; and he had done so, not because he by any means approved all the enactments of that Bill, or felt any confidence in the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Ireland, who was believed to have framed it, but because it appeared to him, after the statement of the noble Earl (the Earl of St. Germans) of the amount of crime and outrage committed in Ireland, that some strong measure was necessary, and because, looking at the character of the noble Lord entrusted with the chief government of Ireland, of the noble Earl (Earl St. Germans) who brought it forward, and at the character of his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for that country (Mr. Greene), he hoped that the powers so liberally given by the Bill would be sparingly and temperately exercised. But he thought that when a measure had been passed which denied a man the commonest right of the subject, the right of free egress and ingress to his home at any time, Parliament was bound to accompany such a measure with some assurance that they would look into the causes which had produced such a state of things in that country as to make that law necessary. Under the circumstances in which Ireland was placed, it was their duty not merely to pass measures to repress outrages, but to put an end to the causes from which such outrages arose; and it was to that, and that only, that the present Address proposed to pledge the House. The noble Duke had objected to the Address, because in the speech which his noble Friend had made, he had expressed his opinion that a great reform was necessary in the Established Church in Ireland. In that sentiment of his noble Friend's, he (Earl Fortescue) cordially concurred. He cordially agreed with him in the opinion which he had expressed, that they would never have perfect contentment in Ireland until the Church of the great body of the people was placed in all respects on an equal footing with that which was called the Established Church—the Church of a very small minority of the people. He concurred also in the wish that they might one day see the heads of that Church taking their share in the counsels of the State in that House of Parliament; and they might rely upon it that not only would it be considered a great boon by the people of Ireland, but that it would be a great advantage to have such an accession of Members to that House, who could give them much useful information, and make many valuable suggestions in legislating for Ireland. The noble Duke had spoken in glowing terms of the improvements which had taken place in the general state of that country. The misfortune, however, was, that this improvement had not extended in a corresponding degree to the lower and poorer classes of society; and it was the want of these improvements among them which rendered them so liable to be made the instruments of agitation and violence. He must say that he thought the great and predominant evil of Ireland was to be found in the circumstances attending, not merely the relation of landlord and tenant, but the tenure and possession of land in Ireland. The conduct of the Anti-Corn-Law League in this country had been blamed; but, without attempting to defend all that might have been said or done by members of that body, he thought that the League had done a great deal of good, and that the country was under a great obligation to them, not on the ground of their having purchased and conferred fictitious titles to property for the purpose of qualifying voters at elections—because that they denied having done—but because they had induced persons who had saved a little money to invest their small savings in land, and thereby acquire an interest in the soil. If the League had assisted such persons

in getting rid of the difficulties which the technicalities of the law imposed upon those who desired to acquire a qualification, he, for one, must say that he thought the country—ay, and the landowners too—ought to be very much obliged to them. It would be very advantageous if the same thing were done in Ireland, because there was at present a total want in that country of those small landowners so numerous in England, who in themselves united the relations of landlord and tenant. He recollected that when the Emancipation Act was passed, and when the rights of the so-called 40*s.* freeholders were very properly abolished, he had suggested that it would be very desirable if the right of voting were continued to persons holding land in fee-simple of the value of 40*s.* a year. He was told, however, that no such thing existed in Ireland, and therefore, that he might save himself the trouble of making the suggestion. Why was that so? He surely could not be told that there did not exist among any portion of the middle classes in Ireland sufficient capital to purchase small landed property in that country. The fact was, that Irish landed property was in general so much encumbered that it was almost impossible to sell it as, in England in small parcels; and that was, he believed, the reason why there was no such thing as small freeholds in Ireland. He hoped, however, that some measure would be introduced which would put the 40*s.* freeholder in England and the 40*s.* freeholder in Ireland on the same footing. He hoped, also, that some measure (he could not say exactly similar to that introduced by his noble Friend last year), would be brought forward to secure compensation for improvements to tenants who were evicted from their holdings. He believed that the tenure of land was, directly or indirectly, at the bottom of the outrages by which Ireland had been disturbed, though they might be aggravated by other causes. At the same time he was quite sure that their Lordships would not restore contentment to Ireland unless they assimilated the law in Ireland to that which obtained in this country, and placed all classes in that respect on an equal footing. For instance, the qualification for the municipal franchise was higher in Ireland than in this country, and it ought to be the same in both. The noble Duke had stated that all the concessions which had been made to Ireland had only produced fresh agitation. It should be recollected, however, that all the concessions which had been made to Ireland had only been the fruit of agitation; and it was not to be expected, therefore, that after this lesson had been taught them, the people of that country would believe that quiet and good conduct was likely to be productive of advantage to them. Catholic Emancipation was conceded to the agitation which was carried on by the Catholic Association; the mitigation of the tithe evil was the result of tumult and of agitation. Such would continue to be the state of things until their Lordships legislated in a spirit which would give the people of Ireland more confidence in the laws, and remove every just cause of agitation, by putting them in all respects upon an equality with their English fellow subjects. If their Lordships acted in that spirit both as respected Church and State, they would, in his opinion, at once and effectually, put down agitation among the people of Ireland, who were certainly not ungrateful for kindness; but if, contrary to all reasonable calculation, they unhappily failed in this benevolent object, they would then unite every friend of peace and good order throughout every part of the United Empire, in support of any measures of security which they might then find it necessary to adopt.

LORD BROUGHAM certainly would not have presented himself to the House upon this occasion, so lately as it was that their Lordships had discussed Irish affairs, had it not been for one or two allusions made in the very able, and, generally speaking, temperate speech of the noble Earl who had submitted the Motion to the House. He was bound to take notice of those allusions, in justice to the case and in fairness towards the Government. To these topics he would refer by and by. Most of the facts to which the noble Earl had called the attention of the House in his speech were, unhappily, too true. Most part of his statement of the amount of distress—of the evil administration of many private affairs—of the misery which prevailed among a large portion of the people of Ireland—of the fearful outrages upon life and property which had, whether as the result of that misery or of other causes, defaced that country, scared the Government from its propriety, and forced it to have recourse to a measure of severe coercion, abridging not merely the political but the natural rights of the subject—all these facts were too true, and indeed were not matter of controversy; they had been all admitted

in the course of the discussion on the late coercive measure. But, unhappily, these things had root far deeper than any misgovernment of the present day, or any political agitation of the present day, though perhaps they were not altogether unconnected with political agitation. They, unhappily, had their root deeply planted and widely spread in the social condition of the Irish people in respect of their enjoyment of landed property, and their exclusive addiction to agricultural pursuits. But was the remedy so easy? Their Lordships could not interfere with the rights of property, the most sacred of all rights, on which society itself depended, the corner-stone of the whole social edifice —the line of demarcation which separated the savage from the civilized state of society. They must, in all they said and did, and in all they meditated to do, start from this first principle; and no man who claimed the name, not only of a statesman, but of a rational being—of a person of common sense and ordinary reflection—could entertain for one moment a doubt, or could allow to pass over the surface of his imagination a shadow of doubt, upon that fundamental principle. But then he found that there were speculators, and practical speculators too, who not only suffered to pass across their imagination the abstract idea that property might be interfered with; but who so far carried that idea into execution as an object of their desire, or used it for the purpose of deluding their dupes in their own country—ignorant men as compared with them, but hardly more thoughtless and unreflecting than they—as to propound Bills on the subject in Parliament, of which he had heard for the first time that night. He could hardly have believed it possible that in the middle of the 19th century, and in a British House of Commons, there should have been propounded what was called by the gentle and euphonious term of fixity of tenure, but which meant thereby an Act of Parliament to rob the owner of land of his property, and to confer it on the occupant his tenant. What cared he for the condition, if the tenant was to have the property in spite of the owner, that he was to have it on the payment of a perpetual rent? That was as much an interference with property—as much a desecration of the sacred right of property, on which all society rested—as if they openly robbed the owner. He could only account for such a Bill not meeting with an indignant rejection at once, by the accident that the matter might have been thought so perfectly absurd and extravagant in itself as to carry its refutation along with it. At all events, it was brought forward about the middle of August, a time when long discussions were to be deprecated, and Government therefore thought it best, he supposed, to get rid of the Bill, mentioning, at the same time, that they meant to appoint a Commission of Inquiry; though he happened to know that that Commission was contemplated before. It was unfortunate that any doubt should have existed as to what was intended by that Commission, which had as much to do with fixity of tenure, in the sense of robbing the landlord on behalf of the tenant, as with robbing the tenant on behalf of the landlord. It was to be lamented that in any part of the United Empire there should exist such a state of things as had gradually grown up in Ireland, and that matters there were otherwise than in this country with respect to the management of property. His noble Friend had well illustrated this circumstance, and he would give another illustration. What did their Lordships think of an estate of between 15,000*l.* and 20,000*l.* a year, on which there were about 1,300 or 1,400 head tenants, and about 3,000 under-tenants, the highest of whom paid 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year, the great bulk from 10*l.* to 20*l.*, and many paid so low as 10*s.*, 12*s.*, and 15*s.*? Another circumstance to which his noble Friend had alluded as calculated to create alarm and indignation was, the casting out of their possessions at one time a great number of those small holders. This happened in consequence of the desire on the part of the landlord to have his land better cultivated by persons who could bring to that cultivation the advantage of capital and skill; and it certainly would be a great hardship to the landlord in Ireland if he had not the free and entire power, as by law he unquestionably had, to dismiss the small holders, and consolidate the farms with the view to improvement, as had been done in Scotland to a great extent, as the noble Duke on the cross-benches well knew. Still he should be loth to believe that an example such as that mentioned by a noble Marquess the other evening, but which immediately met with a satisfactory contradiction, was extensively followed—namely, the turning out of scores of persons from their holdings as soon as their leases expired. Undoubtedly it was the landlord's right to do so if he pleased; and

if he abstained, he conferred a favour, and was doing an act of kindness. If, on the other hand, he chose to stand on his right, the tenants must be taught, by the strong arm of the law, that they had no power to oppose or resist. Such was the law of the land, and property would be valueless and capital would no longer be invested in the cultivation of land, if it were not acknowledged that it was the landlord's undoubted, indefeasible, and most sacred right to deal with his property as he list. His opinion undoubtedly was, that their Lordships began at the right end when, considering the state of outrages existing in Ireland, they passed a coercive measure to put down those outrages. The first lesson to be taught the deluded people of that country was, that they must obey the law, and that all their agitators and all their evil counsellors—be they laymen or priests—could not succeed in urging them to resist the law, or to persist in outrage, without their finding that they must meet with the condign punishment which attended criminal acts. With regard to providing remedial measures for the grievances of which the noble Earl complained, he had alluded to them in so general a manner that their Lordships were left as far away as ever from the consideration of any practical means of putting an end to those evils which in his speech he so strongly described; and he was sure that all their Lordships joined him in deploring those evils. There was but one portion of his speech in which the noble Earl brought forward a specific ground of complaint. For instance, he had complained of a long course of misgovernment in Ireland, and complained of grievances which had been inflicted by that long course of misgovernment, and which they all lamented; but the noble Earl, when alluding to some of those evils, spoke of things which happened many years ago, so long ago that they might be said to have occurred before the experience of the present generation, and which were no doubt the fruitful sources of evil; but when the noble Earl described that misgovernment, he did not follow up his description by prescribing any practical means for remedying the evils. The noble Earl alluded to one specific grievance in Ireland, namely, the anomalous state in which the religious sects were balanced, or rather not balanced, in point of numbers and property; but he stated that the Catholics would have cheerfully submitted to that disposition of the property with regard to the relative numbers of the religious sects, if it had not been for one grievance in connexion with the payment of tithes to the Established Church, namely, the mode of collecting them, which mode was so unbearable as to become in their minds the master grievance, and to cause them to entertain a more violent feeling of opposition to this impost. He had no wish to deny the grievances which that collection might have produced; but he recollected that in 1832 he introduced, with his noble Friend opposite, (Lord Stanley), a Bill, which his noble Friend had been connected with executively, and that Bill put an end altogether to the former mode of collecting tithes. So that he took it, a tithe proctor was a thing *in rerum naturæ*, not to be found in Ireland at the present day; that it was, as Lord Plunkett had said on another occasion, as difficult now to meet with one of them in the country as to meet with an ostrich. The tithe was not now collected in the manner which was formerly complained of by the Roman Catholics as so severe a grievance, and to which the noble Earl alluded—it was paid now by a rent-charge—paid by the landlord, and not by the occupying tenant; and therefore the evils and sufferings which had been endured from the mode of collecting the tithe ought to be struck at one dash of the pen from the list of grievances of which the noble Earl complained. He would direct their Lordships' attention particularly to the more specific and precise grievances complained of by the noble Earl; and he would show that they were such that the blame could not be laid upon this or that Administration, but rather more properly to the state of society in Ireland. One of those had reference to the administration of justice in Ireland, and the other to the balance of the churches and sects. With respect to the administration of justice in Ireland, it was a subject to which he had given much consideration, and which he had carefully examined. It might be in the recollection of many of his noble Friends that, in 1823, when he had a seat in the other House of Parliament, he presented a petition from Ireland, complaining earnestly of the grievances under which the people at that time laboured in consequence of the maladministration of justice in that country. It was a painful duty for him (Lord Brougham) to go through all the instances, and afterwards to expose them to the House, which showed that justice had not

been properly administered in that country; that the complaint of the maladministration of justice in the petition which he presented was founded on a real grievance; and that it was no clamour, no popular outcry or vague charge, such as he should show it was at present. It was a fact well known in the history of Ireland, that every species of expedient was resorted to in order to carry the great and wholesome and invaluable measure of the Union into law; and one of those expedients led to a great abuse of judicial patronage—the most delicate and responsible description of patronage with which the Government was invested. In consequence of this, certain learned persons—or rather, he should say, certain persons more or less learned, were promoted to the Bench—all of them learned by courtesy, but some of them learned in fact as well as courtesy—and those Judges who were appointed at that period were known afterwards by the name of "Union Judges"—a name now recollected as only a matter of history; but as *post hoc ergo propter hoc* was sometimes a sound maxim in logic, it was argued by many, that as those Judges had been appointed at the time of the Union, they had also been appointed in consequence of the Union; and if he were called on to point out Judges appointed in Ireland who had given the greatest satisfaction to all, who had conferred honour upon those who appointed them, and who had obtained the confidence of those around them, he should not point to some of those Judges as filling that character. During their time the administration of justice had been very political, and some judicial charges had been delivered which evinced strong political and even factious bias on the Bench. But that was all over long ago, and things were now altogether changed in this respect. In consequence of the notice which the noble Earl had given, he (Lord Brougham) within the last three days read over the statement which he made in the other House on the occasion to which he had before alluded (in 1823). He read the exact passages as he had spoken them, and he could assure their Lordships that he found no single ground of complaint which he then urged still continuing to exist. It had been stated to their Lordships that of late years certain political appointments had been made—that political partisans had been selected for promotion. The question, however, was not whether the Judge who had been selected had been a political partisan when at the Bar, and whether he was a political partisan before he was elevated to the Bench—not whether he was given to factious courses before his elevation—the question was, what had he done since his elevation? The question was, had he thrown off with the gown which he had worn as a barrister the character of a partisan, or was he still, after his elevation to the Bench, political—had he retained his party feelings where party feelings should never enter, or continued to be a partisan when he occupied a position where factious feeling should never come? On his gown, as a barrister, he had a right to carry the badge of faction, and it would not soil him; but the ermine should be free from any such stain. Was it to be said, if a man of any particular party or political opinions were elevated to the Bench, that he was therefore a political Judge? If that were so, it would be highly objectionable; but if it were not, what did it signify? It had been said, indeed, that the appointments to which allusion had been made by the noble Earl, had been unfavourably viewed by the people of Ireland; and in answer to that argument, he (Lord Brougham) would remark that he divided the people of Ireland into two classes, one half, and more than one-half, disapproved of the appointments, and one-half and more, approved of them. [*A laugh.*] He had fallen into a mistake, but the statement of the noble Earl was so long it was enough to cause him to believe that it consisted of more than two halves, and therefore led to his mistake. The appointments were highly approved of by one party in Ireland, and disapproved of by others. But, good lack! if they waited till all the people in Ireland approved of judicial appointments, there would be no use in Coercion Bills, for there would be no Judges to administer the law. What were the appointments which had been made of late years in Ireland? There was Mr. Devonsher Jackson, and there was Mr. Serjeant Lefroy, men whom he only named to honour, for more able, learned, and upright Judges could not be found; and be it recollected that he did not speak as a partisan, for he differed from those Judges in the political opinions which they held before their elevation; they were honourable and just men, and totally incapable of exhibiting, as Judges, any political or party bias. Then, during the Melbourne Administration, Mr. O'Loghlen, a Roman Catholic, and Mr.

Perrin, a Protestant, were elevated to the Bench; and subsequently Mr. Ball, Mr. Wolfe, and Mr. Brady were appointed, every one of them having been before their elevation politicians and party men more or less, and they were all upright and able men on the Bench. He should also mention Judge Crampton and Mr. Blackburne, the latter of whom, although differing in politics from the Whig Government, had been appointed Attorney General during the viceroyalty of Lord Anglesea in Ireland. It would be better to have men who had never been politicians or party men; but the difficulty was not to get such men to lay aside their political feelings after their appointment to the Bench, but in getting people to believe that they had done so; for it had been truly said that justice ought not only to be pure but unsuspected. Those appointments showed that the choice of Judges from among men who had been politicians was not the fault of any Administration, but was the result of absolute necessity, which arose in consequence of all the Bar in Ireland being more or less engaged in politics, and more or less political partisans. They should therefore go on selecting from one party or another until a third party sprung up in Ireland—a third party, the want of which Lord Plunkett had said was the greatest curse of that country, and then at that remote day they might be enabled to select Judges who were not attached to either of the parties in Ireland. It had been the same in Scotland. Fifty years ago, in Scotland, every one at the Bar was either of the Hanoverian or Jacobite party; it behoved every man to be a party man, to be either for King George, or King James; and every one who was promoted to the Bench was accordingly selected from one or the other party. But that time was gone by; and either from the greater lights of the present age, the greater liberality of opinion which prevailed, and, above all, the utter hopelessness of the cause of the Jacobites, it was altogether forgotten. So long as there were two great parties in Ireland, a Catholic and a Protestant party—but, indeed, the distinction of party was not confined to Ireland, for in England we had Conservatives and Liberals, or he preferred the old names of Whig and Tory—so long would they find barristers belonging to one party or another. The Irish Judges who at present filled the Bench were men of great learning, wisdom, and ability; and he would state to their Lordships that the writs of error and appeals which came before them in that House from Ireland showed such an amount of learning and ability on the part of the Irish Judges, that it would be impossible to speak too highly of it. The fault was not in any particular Administration, but in the social state of Ireland, where there were seven millions of Catholics, and only one million of Protestants. Then it was stated that there was an ecclesiastical grievance. By an act of violence, it was said, the Legislature took away from the Catholics the property of the Catholic Church, and gave it to the Protestant Church. But that property was given for Christian and religious uses; and as the kind of forms and discipline through which religion should be taught were matters of human rather than divine ordinance, it became the right, and not only the right but the duty, of Parliament to make such arrangements as should cause the religion of the State to be taught through the means of that property. That was the case; it had produced a most anomalous state of things, the greatest anomaly in ecclesiastical history; he admitted it was a great evil; he would go the length of saying it was the master evil in the state of Ireland. The emoluments of a Church well endowed were received by the pastors of 600,000 or 700,000 of the people; the rest of the inhabitants, 6,000,000 or 7,000,000, having to pay their priests for spiritual services. That was a great evil, and a grievous anomaly. But, when he came to deal with it, then he felt the force of the noble Earl's remarks on the difficulty of the case; he heartily agreed with him that it was difficult, excessively difficult, and he would add, so difficult that he thought it impossible. How could they deal with it? What the noble Earl proposed was only a palliative; it would never be tried, but if it should be tried, he predicted it would fail most signally; the palliative would be rejected by everybody, lay as well as clerical, with indignation. The true remedy was of another description; the people ought not to be left to pay for their own religious instruction: the State should pay the Roman Catholic clergy. He would not entertain that question at present further than to say, that though it was stated the Catholic clergy would not receive that payment, he would stake his life upon it they would. If they did not, they would find it much more difficult afterwards to get their payment from the people; and,

partly from a love of connecting themselves with the Government and the Treasury, and partly from the increased difficulty of getting a regular payment from the people, depend on it they would sooner or later accept it, perhaps not in the first quarter, but certainly by the end of the second. With respect to the subject of challenging Catholics who were summoned on a jury, he asserted they were not challenged *quasi* Catholics; but if men were liable to other objections then they might be set aside, even though they were Catholics, and that, he would assert, was the case with respect to those Catholics who had been set aside. He could, however, suppose a case in which it would be a very fair ground of challenge to a person that he was a Roman Catholic. If a murder was committed—if a question arose which involved the subject of Catholic and Protestant—if the question were involved of favour towards a Catholic charged with an offence, or doing justice against him where the question was Catholic—it might then be supposed that in such a case the ends of justice might not be best answered by the case being tried by a Catholic jury. The noble Earl had called their attention to the case of foreigners tried for offences by mixed juries: but it was incorrect to say that they were to be tried by a jury composed of half their own countrymen and half of Englishmen—they might be tried by a jury consisting one half of foreigners and one half of Englishmen—so that a Frenchman might be tried by a jury half of Spaniards and half of Englishmen. The conclusion, he feared, to which their Lordships must come, was that of the evils which afflicted Ireland, by far the greater proportion lay beyond the reach of a legal remedy—that the remedy would consist in a great degree of the advance of civilization and refinement; of the strict and impartial execution of the law; firmness and vigour on the part of the Executive Government—a Government which would refuse to barter and traffic with agitators—who would adopt as high a tone as any men deserving the name of Ministers or the name of a Cabinet ought to hold towards those who offended against the law—and who would refuse to barter or compromise with such legal offenders, whether they were individuals or associations—but who would discharge their duties as Ministers of the Crown regardless of all attacks, whether from agitators or Catholic priests, It was to a fair discharge of duty, without partiality, but with vigour, that he looked for the first impulse towards a healthier state of things. Then God forbid that any ameliorations of the law should be withheld! He was about to introduce a Bill for extending to mortgages and leases the provisions of an Act by which the difficulties in the conveyance of land were now greatly removed in this country. Why not extend those provisions to Ireland? His noble Friend had spoken of the law as expensive in Ireland. The law in England was ten times more expensive. Ireland had some admirable institutions, such as the Assistant Barristers' Court; and cheap law was so much the lot of Ireland, that it was usual for people here to point to the state of that country as a reason for not making the law cheap here. It gave him, at all times, very great pain to argue in favour of coercion, and still greater pain to be compelled to state that for existing evils—great grievances—he could see no legislative remedies except those of a distant and indirect nature. But those evils would be aggravated if their Lordships gave their high countenance to clamours which existed out of doors as to the pure administration of justice; if they lent themselves to the jobbing arts of one person, and the malpractices of another; if they made themselves accomplices of one half the mischiefs that arose; and he, for one, was not able to acquit the political agitators of all participation in the agrarian disturbances, for he had read speeches made at meetings by priests and others which went indirectly to suggest attacks on the landed interest; not saying that property has its duties as well as its rights, which, like the right of resistance, was very wholesome, as remarked by Mr. Fox, to be remembered by kings, but very dangerous to be remembered by subjects; was very wholesome to be borne in mind by landlords, but very dangerous to be ventilated among a disturbed population of tenants under them. He believed that property had its duties, and he believed also that the landlords of Ireland faithfully and honestly discharged them; but their right was a right of perfect obligation and a legal one, whilst their duty was one of imperfect obligation, as moralists call it. If he saw a poor woman starving with a baby in her arms, and he refused to give her a shilling to relieve her distress, he should deserve to be called a hard-hearted man; but the law said that she should not take the shilling from him, as he had a legal right to keep it. That was

the case of the Irish landlords, and he hoped that they would always to continue to discharge, as he believed they now discharged, not only their perfect duties, but those of imperfect obligation, charitably, kindly, and affectionately.

Earl FITZWILLIAM said, that he thought the House and the country were indebted to the noble Earl who had brought forward this Motion. Ireland was a country of which Englishmen were exceedingly ignorant. It was a mirror in which England did not very well wish to look, but from which she ought not to shrink, although she might not see anything reflected there which would cause her to exult. England might see in that mirror much cause of regret and much cause of shame; and although at present those charges could be made with less justice, yet it could not be said that England even now looked with perfect justice upon Ireland. One most important part of the noble Earl's speech related to the Church of Ireland. On a former occasion he (Earl Fitzwilliam) had ventured to state his opinion that the Legislature must deal with that Church. The noble and learned Lord who had just sat down, stated that the subject was one of difficulty; indeed, he appeared to think it was impossible; and the noble Duke went even further, and talked of an eternal compact made by which the Churches of England and Ireland were for ever established in that country. The noble Duke would allow him to suggest that the words "for ever" were words which legislators ought to be very cautious in using. This generation had no right to disinherit their posterity of the exercise of their full legislative functions; any more than their predecessors had a right to deprive the present legislators of their functions. He ventured to think, on the contrary, that they had received the right of legislating freely from their progenitors, and that they should transmit that right with equal freedom to their posterity. As the "Imperial" Parliament, they had a full right to deal with that question as seemed to them meet and just. Would their Lordships establish an eternal anomaly in Ireland, as the noble and learned Lord had called the Church of that country? He should look with great regret to any portion of the land of Ireland being deprived of a Protestant Church and Protestant ministration; but that should not prevent them dealing with the question. He confessed he did not clearly understand the nature of the course which his noble Friend proposed to adopt. Did he mean to take out of the pockets of the people of England money raised by way of taxation for the payment of the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland? He (Earl Fitzwilliam) trusted that he never should see such an attempt made. Let their Lordships see what it would be doing. It would be making the Catholic clergy of Ireland a stipendiary priesthood. As a Protestant he should never think of proposing such a measure; if he were a Catholic he should never accept it. He should like to see the Protestant and Catholic priesthood placed on a similar footing; and that was the only condition on which they could with propriety or ought to be placed. There was no other footing on which they could be satisfactorily disposed, but that in which one could not look down upon the other as an inferior, or on the other as a superior. But their Lordships might depend upon it that the question should be deal with; and if it were not dealt with fairly and shortly, they would have other questions arising of still more awful interest to the two countries—of still more serious and awful interest to the landholders of Ireland. His noble Friend to the left (Lord Brougham) had made a speech which would, doubtless, be very acceptable to the landed proprietors of Ireland. He (Earl Fitzwilliam) could well imagine a Chancellor of the time of Edward III. presenting a petition from the villeins of that day asking a Parliament of the Plantagenets to give them "fixity of tenure;" but what would such a Chancellor think now, could he be but resuscitated, to see the villeins of those days, who held their land by just such a precarious tenure as the cottier tenants of Ireland at the present time hold theirs—could he but see the descendants of those villeins now, in the reign of the sixth Sovereign of the House of Brunswick, holding their lands by a tenure of copyhold, a tenure as good as that by which any one of their Lordships held their estates? It was of course well known that everything that was said in that House was sent elsewhere; but he was desirous of addressing himself, not abroad, but to their Lordships: and it was to their Lordships only he spoke when he requested them not to induce the cottier tenants of Ireland to look too sharply into the rights by which landed property was held. The first thing which he was desirous of doing was, to lay the foundation of a better order of things in love and in the affectionate gratitude of the people. Let them in that spirit look to the great questions with which

they had to deal. And, with respect to the Church question, where was the difficulty to be found which should prevent them addressing themselves to its consideration? Was it to be found in the prejudices and bigotry of England? Or should they go farther north, and look to the prejudices and bigotry of Scotland? Was it the Presbyterianism of Scotland that refused to listen to any interference with the Church Establishment of Ireland? What struggles had been made by England to establish Episcopacy in Scotland, and how successfully had those attempts been resisted! Was it correct that England had failed to establish Episcopacy in Scotland in despite of the feelings and opinions of the great majority of the people? Was there a single one of their Lordships who would venture to rise in his place and say that it was? or would any one of their Lordships, on the other hand—and he would address himself particularly to his noble Friend the leader of the Presbyterian Church party in that House (Lord Kinnaird); would his noble Friend, or any of the Scottish Peers, assert that it was wrong to establish the Presbyterian Church in Scotland instead of the Church of England? If their Lordships would not venture to sustain either of those propositions, would they still assert that it would be wrong to establish the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland? If it were right to have established Presbyterianism in Scotland, why would it be wrong to establish Catholicity in Ireland? Was that which was right and justice in Scotland, wrong and injustice when transferred to Ireland? But with regard to the Church property, it had been bequeathed, and it belonged not to any particular sect, but to the Church of Christ. He denied that it belonged to the Church of England by right. He denied that it belonged of right to the Roman Catholic Church. It had been made to belong to the Church of England by Act of Parliament. But was that Act of Parliament in itself right? That property should be applied in the true spirit of charity, to the uses of all the people, and not to the exclusive use or benefit of any particular sect; and that their Lordships would shortly be obliged to deal with the question he was satisfied. But his noble Friend had said that he would put down agitation in Ireland. Put down agitation! Why, how had anything been ever gained by Ireland except by agitation? How had Roman Catholic Emancipation been extorted from the noble Duke opposite except by agitation? His noble Friend knew very well that Ireland owed every amelioration in her condition to agitation. The expression "put down agitation in Ireland," meant "put down every means of obtaining anything for the improvement of the condition of Ireland." The only mode by which the agitation at present existing in Ireland could be put down, would be by legislating for Ireland as an Irish Parliament would legislate. Not as a restoration of the old Irish Parliament would act, for the Irish aristocracy had no community of feeling with the people. They had not grown up out of the people of Ireland, but had been imposed upon them; and to say that a restoration of the old Irish Parliament would do good for the country was absurd. There was no more perfect specimen of an oligarchy than that Parliament presented.

Lord BROUGHAM explained some points in his speech; and said he could inform the noble Earl (Earl Fitzwilliam) that if he so admired the fixity of tenure principle, by which the villeins had become proprietors, he had only to allow his tenants in the county Wicklow to hold for forty years without demanding any rent from them, and they would be proprietors to his noble Friend's heart's content.

The Marquess of CLANRICARDE should not have thought of taking any part in the debate, or of occupying their Lordships' time at that late hour, but that he unfortunately differed from his noble Friend on many of the reasons which he had given in support of the Motion which he (the Marquess of Clanricarde) should support also, but for different reasons. And in the first place, he begged leave to assure the noble Duke opposite that he was mistaken in the assertion he had made regarding the petition to which he had alluded. He (the Marquess of Clanricarde) had never signed his name to any petition that prayed for the overthrow of the Protestant Church in Ireland, or set it forth as one of the principal grievances of the country. He could not, of course, answer for individual opinions; but, speaking generally, the noble Lords who had signed the petition referred to by the noble Duke, were not persons who entertained such an opinion. The Protestant Church had been put forward so frequently, that it had become at length associated in the minds of the people of Ireland with the idea of a monstrous abuse, and with much that was unpopular. It was said that the Established Church in Ireland was at the bottom of all the diffi-

culties of the country. He did not agree in that opinion; and his noble Friend who had quoted his illustrious countryman, Grattan, ought to have remembered that that great man had always avowed his determination to maintain the Protestant Church in its integrity, and had expressly declared that determination upon every occasion which he proposed Catholic Emancipation. The evidence of Mr. O'Connell himself, before Parliamentary Committees, was to the effect that he never desired or contemplated the destruction of the Protestant Church. But "the Church" did not signify the clergy merely. It meant the great body of the people. And if the establishment could be shown to be out of all proportion to the communicants, he, and he believed all his Friends around him, would be ready to consider the reduction of that establishment, and the reform of any abuses which might have crept into it. As an Irish resident, he was competent to form an opinion upon one part of the subject. He had had an opportunity of seeing the effects of the voluntary system carried to its greatest extent; and he could say that it was the very worst description of system for the support of the clergy; and he would willingly pay his proportion if a tax for the support of the Catholic clergy, were a plan devised by which that object could be attained. He would deem it money very well laid out, and he would think it a very cheap purchase of peace, and of an improved condition of society. But their Lordships would see that they could never pay the Catholic clergy without their own consent, nor without the consent of the Catholic people of Ireland. Those of their Lordships who were acquainted with the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions, as they existed relatively in Ireland, would also see the difficulty of dealing with the question upon another point. The chief portion of the revenues of the Catholic clergy was raised by means of resembling what were called "surplice fees" in the Protestant Church. Now, they had thought fit to permit and to encourage the collection of surplus fees in the Established Church, so that they still existed in addition to the fixed revenues. Again, the taking of the property from the Protestant Church and handing it over to the Catholic, would not obviate the difficulty; for if one half the revenues were so transferred, it would leave the objection still that the division was not in fair proportion, and that the Catholics should get at least seven-eighths. But, still, he thought, that they should look to the temporalities of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and lop off such proportion of its extra wealth and useless revenues as should appear excessive to the great body of the people. No man in his senses could fail to regret the present position of the Church, and something should be done to remedy its position without destroying it; for he (the Marquess of Clanricarde) could not consent to any measure for its destruction. He thought that the necessity had arisen for the Imperial Parliament to interfere, and force the Ministers into taking measures for the amelioration of the condition of the people of Ireland. He was sorry to have heard the noble Duke speaking in such cheerful tones of the state of Ireland. Why, had they not just passed a Coercion Bill for that country upon the most meagre grounds that ever were put forward by a Minister? Upon previous occasions, when such extraordinary measures were called for, it had been the custom to lay Papers, containing voluminous reports, upon the Table, and upon their contents discussions had been raised. It could not be expected that such measures would be granted upon the mere parole evidence of a Minister. But on the present occasion there was no such evidence brought forward; and why? Because the facts of the present emergency were open and palpable to all; so open and so palpable that every one knew them. They also had agreed to pass sudden and extraordinary measures for the relief of poverty, without calling for proofs further than those facts that were palpable to all. But more than that remained to be done. They saw the Queen's Government denuded of all authority. They saw the Queen's Representative in Ireland virtually reduced to the condition of a mere superintendent of police. They saw the Repeal Association, on the other hand, supported by the entire people, led by men of great learning, ability, and untiring energy; connected, too, with the clergy of the people; having its own organs and officers, and in full possession of the public mind. That was the relative position of the Government as regarded one party in the country. On the other hand, there was the great body of Protestants in the north of Ireland. The Government had certainly not secured their confidence. Nor was the state of things in any respect in Ireland such as to reflect credit on the Govern-

ment. The present Ministers were responsible for this state of things. The country was in a very different state when the present Government received it from the hands of its predecessor. He referred to the charges of the Judges in 1842, to show that the country was then in a state of perfect tranquillity. He really did not wonder at the attachment of the people to the idea of Repeal, when he considered the way they had been treated of late years, as for instance in respect to the electoral franchise, and to municipal corporations. As his noble Friend (Earl Grey) had reminded their Lordships, the creed and politics of the people had been injudiciously urged as a reason for not giving the people the same franchise as in England. It had been said, that if the Irish people had the same franchise as in England, they would have Roman Catholic and Radical Mayors and Aldermen in all the large towns. Well, he would like to know why they should not have Roman Catholic and Radical Mayors in all the corporations if the people happened to be of that creed and of those opinions? In 1841, Sir R. Peel taunted the Whig Government with not having brought in a Registration Bill; and yet here they were near Easter, in 1846, without any thing being done upon that, or any other matter by the right hon. Baronet's own Government, except to state that after some matters were disposed of, they intended to introduce some measure on the subject. The present Administration had appointed a Commission to inquire into the state of landlord and tenant in Ireland—a step which he considered one of the most mischievous that had ever been taken by an undecided, vacillating feeble Government. But having appointed such a Commission, he thought that when they got the Report, the least the Government could have done was to have founded some measure upon it. There was no doubt that the minds of the people of Ireland had become greatly alienated from the Imperial Parliament; and he considered that much of the blame of this lay at the door of the present Government. His noble Friend (Earl Grey) had alluded to the judicial appointments of the Government. This, he was aware, was a very delicate subject; but after what his noble Friend had stated, he could not help saying that these appointments had been most unfortunate. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) said, that Government could not help men being partisans. Perhaps they could not; but they could watch the conduct of men who were extremely violent and conspicuous and offensive to the great body of their fellow countrymen, and could avoid appointing such persons to administer the laws of the country. Noble Lords opposite had found great fault with a noble Friend of his for having offered a seat on the judicial Bench to Mr. O'Connell; and therefore had no right to rely upon it as a precedent, which it was not as it referred solely to an Equity Court. No one objected to the appointment of a person like Sir E. Sugden to a judicial office, even though a party man; but when a person who conspicuously sided with a party in the country, and who joined in declarations against the religion of the people, so strong as to imply that individuals of this prevailing religion were not easily and readily to be believed on their oath; when such a person was exalted to preside over the criminal tribunals of the country, it could not fail to give the mass of the population a distrust of these tribunals. The circumstances connected with the late State trials, was another source of discontent among the people. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) had said that he could easily imagine a case where it would be justifiable to exclude a person from a jury on account of his being a Catholic. He (Lord Clanricarde) could not concur in this opinion. He thought that such a system was altogether indefensible. The condition of the country had been stated that night in very strong terms; but he believed it had not at all been exaggerated—he meant in regard to its political aspect. He believed that the state of Irish politics had never been fraught with so much danger to the integrity of the Empire as at this very moment. He had had conversations with those who were old enough to remember the period of 1798, and the year before that memorable and unfortunate year; and he believed from what he had heard, that at that disastrous period there was no such danger to be apprehended as at this moment, when there was a spirit of deep-rooted discontent abroad which it would be necessary to take the most energetic steps to deal with. He thought it was high time that Parliament should determine not to leave Government to provide in any way they pleased for the peace and prosperity of that country, and therefore he gave his hearty assent to the Motion of his noble Friend.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON rose, and said he had never presented a petition in

which the Irish Church had been denominated a grievance, as seemed to be imputed to him by the noble Lord.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH said, there were one or two statements in the speech of the noble Earl (Earl Grey) which required some explanation before they could be allowed to go forth as deserving of credit. He had stated that one Irish landlord received as high as 18*l.* an acre for conacre land. But the noble Earl ought to have explained what conacre land was. Conacre land was land highly manured and seeded; and, besides, an Irish acre was larger than an English acre in the proportion of eight to five. He (Lord Westmeath) had heard of some conacre land as high as 9*l.* and 12*l.* an acre, and in one instance, in Tipperary, as high as 13*l.*, but he had never himself seen any so high. He thought it was invidious of the noble Earl to throw out that the Irish landlords let their land at that price, without, at the same time, explaining what conacre was. The fact was, in his opinion, that nothing could be more unfortunate for an Irish landlord than to have his land let in conacre. Another point to which the noble Earl referred, was the maladministration of justice in Ireland, and the appointments of judges, alluding to the usefulness of the magistracy, for that he must have meant when he spoke of the superior respect that the Irish people had for the Repeal courts as compared to the lawful tribunals. That absurdity of the Repeal courts was now over; and he must say that he never knew a poor man go before one of them except from fear and compulsion. As to the assertions of the noble Earl and the noble Marquess near him of the extreme discontent of the Irish with the Imperial Government, he denied its existence. The people of Ireland had in their hearts no such feeling. The Repeal agitation, and other agitations which had been going for a length of time, had done all that industry and perseverance and talent could do to alienate the feelings of the people from this country; and he was sorry to see a noble Peer of this country endeavouring to impose on their Lordships and the country, from intelligence he had received, which he (the Marquess of Westmeath) thought was very worthless, the idea that the feeling of dissatisfaction did exist among the people of Ireland. As an Irish Representative Peer, he felt it his duty to assert that the Irish people were not so discontented at heart. There was a press maintained in that country for the purpose of sedition. It was maintained by large sums of money, and circulated gratis, and it lost no opportunity of exasperating the people against the Saxon; but the heart of the Irish people, he was convinced, was sound; he was convinced that they were attached to the English connexion, that they were desirous of obeying the law, and that they would always show that obedience to the law when the Government was strong enough to protect them.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that after what the noble Earl had said with respect to the Irish Church, it was quite impossible for him to vote with the noble Earl; but he was anxious that it should not be thought that, in voting against the noble Earl, he was expressing any confidence in the Government: he did not feel that confidence, and, what was more, he never again should entertain that confidence in those who he thought had treated most ill the interests to which he was attached.

The MARQUESS of LONDONDERRY said, that admitting a great part of the noble Earl's argument to be strong, and what he concurred in, yet, when he found, towards the end of the noble Earl's speech, what was the real object of his Address, he thought the noble Earl had better have concluded by moving an Address to Her Majesty to reform the Irish Church. But if that reform were carried as the noble Earl wished, there would no longer be any security for the estates of the landed proprietors. He should like to know, if the noble Earl were to carry his project into execution, and he (the Marquess of Londonderry) were to lose his Irish estates in consequence, whether he would give him his Howick estate as a compensation? The noble Earl had said that he would not shrink from upholding the Union; but how would the overthrow of the Established Church be compatible with the maintenance of the Union? If they abandoned the Church of Ireland, they would commit a breach of the engagement entered into between the people of Ireland and the people of England at the Union. He (the Marquess of Londonderry) had a strong feeling with regard to the improper evictions and ejectments that had taken place in Ireland. Something, he thought, ought to be done to place some restriction on the practice. It would be a very great improvement if the great non-resident proprietors of Ireland would occasionally go

there and stay three or four months or so, and see for themselves into the real state of things, and that justice was done their tenantry. If they would only go amongst that people, whom he must call a grateful, obedient, and affectionate people, and live amongst them, he was sure that the country would be different from what it is, and very far from wanting those laws which, Session after Session, they were bringing in. He would mention one anecdote illustrative of what he had said. He knew a noble lady, who had a large estate of 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* a year, in one of the northern counties of Ireland. She had an agent who thought it necessary to eject from fifty to sixty persons who were greatly in arrear from the estate. She was advised to send over money, and lay it out to make these poor people comfortable, and see whether that would not do good. She took that advice, and sent over money to make their habitations comfortable, and gave them clothing and fuel, and built them pig-houses, and in three or four years the tenantry presented a totally different aspect, and the arrear, which was very considerable, was nearly all paid off. He would tell the noble Earl, as an Irishman who had lived much in Ireland, that if ever Parliament attempted to destroy the Protestant Church of Ireland, they would hardly do it without a return of the scenes of 1798.

The EARL of ST. GERMANS would crave the attention of the House but for a very few moments. The objections he had felt to the proposition of the noble Earl had not been removed by the speeches he had heard. The noble Earl made this Motion distinctly on the ground that he meant to follow it up by some measure tending to the spoliation of the Irish Protestant Church. He was not about to follow the noble Earl into the wide field over which he had travelled. He had touched on the subjects of agrarian outrages, the administration of justice, the Established Church, the Landlord and Tenant Commission, and what was called fixity of tenure—subjects any one of them of such magnitude as to discuss it would occupy the greater part of an evening. He should not be doing justice to any of these subjects if he were to follow the noble Earl into all he had said upon them. The noble Earl had said that the Landlord and Tenant Commission was an ill-advised and ill-conducted Commission. He entirely differed with the noble Earl, and he would say that any one who took up the Report of that Commission, would, if he read it attentively, have a greater knowledge of Ireland than he could possibly acquire from any other source. In the observations which the noble Earl made on agrarian outrages in the south of Ireland, he connected them, as he (the Earl of St. Germans) understood him, with political grievances; but if that were the case, the same causes would produce the same effects elsewhere; and why then did they not find the same agrarian outrages in the northern and midland counties of Ireland that took place in the south? With respect to the tenure of land, the Government had last Session felt that the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland were not in a satisfactory state, and they did lay before their Lordships a Bill for the purpose of remedying the defects of the system; but it was not possible, owing to the late period of the Session, to give it due consideration. Now, however, they had a measure in preparation, which he trusted would be found, while it respected the rights of the landlords, to secure to the occupying tenant the benefit of improvements and everything to which he might be found to be fully entitled. With respect to what the noble Earl had said of the Judges, he was convinced there was no greater confidence placed in any men in Ireland, than in those to whom the noble Earl and other noble Lords opposite had alluded. He was bound in justice to say, that they were guided in their proceedings by the purest motives; and since their elevation to the Bench no men could have discharged their high functions with greater impartiality; and how much soever some of them might have been conscientiously opposed to Catholic emancipation, no man ever for a moment supposed that they allowed any religious feeling to influence them in the exercise of their duties. There were, indeed, no men in Ireland whose judgments were entitled to greater respect than Judges Lefroy and Jackson. As to the Church question, he agreed with what had fallen from the noble Duke near him (the Duke of Wellington), and dissented totally from the noble Earl opposite as to the obligation to maintain the integrity of the Protestant Church in Ireland. There could be no doubt that a compact was entered into at the period of the Union for the permanent preservation of the Established Church in Ireland. The noble Earl had adverted to the case of Scotland,

But the noble Earl should have recollected that at the time of the Union with Scotland, the Presbyterian religion was the established religion of the country, and that the Parliament of England treated with the Parliament of Scotland as a co-ordinate power. So with regard to Ireland. The Protestant religion at the time of the Union was the established religion of the country, and the Parliament of Ireland entered into an agreement with that of England permanently to maintain the Established Church in Ireland. It had all along been stated by the leaders of the Roman Catholics that they had no desire to injure that Church; and he felt satisfied that if the people of this country had not put faith in the declarations made by the Roman Catholic leaders to that effect, neither the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, nor the noble Duke near him, would have been able to carry the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. He maintained, therefore, that they had no right to violate a compact of this nature, unless they could make out a case of paramount and overwhelming necessity for so doing. The noble Earl had failed to make out such a case. He did not agree with the noble Earl in believing that the Church in Ireland was the cause of heartburning and discontent in that country. [Earl GREY: Hear.] The noble Earl met his assertion with a derisive cheer; but his acquaintance with the people of Ireland did not lead him to the conclusion that the Roman Catholics desired to possess the temporalities of the Established Church in that country. He said so on the best authority—on that of the Roman Catholic prelates themselves. He could not help observing that very great misapprehension and exaggeration prevailed respecting the temporalities of the Irish Church. It did not exceed 600,000*l.* or 650,000*l.* a year; there were 1,400 beneficed clergymen, and about 700 curates in Ireland; so that, dividing the temporalities by the number of clergymen, there was not to every incumbent a larger salary than 300*l.* a year. Absenteeism was one of the grievances of Ireland, and he could not help believing that the withdrawing from that country such a well-educated body of men as the Protestant clergy would be a much greater mischief to Ireland, than apportioning part of their income to the support of the Roman Catholic clergy. Though the Roman Catholics had declared their willingness to cut down the temporalities of the Established Church, they had always refused to participate in those temporalities. But while the Government refused to lay their hands on the possessions of the Established Church, they had not neglected the real interests of the Roman Catholic Church. He might refer to the healing measures which had been passed for the relief of Ireland, to show that Government did not disregard the wants of the Irish people. They had done everything in their power to bring instruction to the door of the poor; and he was happy to inform the House that a great increase of education had taken place in Ireland during the last years. The number of schools had increased by 273, and the number of children, 37,000. They were about to establish model schools; and he need not remind the House of the Colleges which had been established to secure for the middle classes the benefits of a sound education. He had much pleasure in reading to their Lordships a letter which had been received from Mr. Macdonnell, the resident Commissioner of Education, in reference to these Colleges and the recent appointments, which he was sure would be regarded as highly satisfactory. The statement of Mr. Macdonnell was, that the appointments of the Presidents of those Colleges by Lord Heytesbury were "the best and most honest appointments ever made in Ireland." Such testimony was most honourable to the noble Lord who was at the head of the Government in Ireland. He had much satisfaction also in informing the House that the increased grant to the College of Maynooth had been received with the most grateful feelings, and that much good, in producing kindly sentiments towards this country, had resulted from the measure. He had called their attention to these few points to show that Government had not been unmindful of the actual wants of their Catholic fellow subjects, but were disposed to adopt every possible means to promote their moral and social well-being. He could not venture to hope, that in the present state of the public mind justice would be done to the efforts now making by Government to promote the welfare of the people of Ireland; but he trusted the day was not distant when the mists of prejudice and passion would so far pass away that justice would be done to his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, and that his Administration would yet be regarded as having laboured not without success to promote the permanent good of the people.

EARL GREY replied: He said he was

desirous to explain one or two matters on which it appeared he had been misunderstood. In reference to the subject of the conacre letting of land, he stated that it was not the amount of rent of which he complained, although it did appear to him to be enormous; but the grievance to which he called attention was, that where the occupier had paid his rent, and the person from whom he held had neglected to pay his rent to the person above him again—that the unfortunate occupier was liable to have the very potatoes he had reared for the support of himself and family taken from him for the rent he had no right to pay, as well as to be turned out of the land altogether; which was a state of things that he considered ought to be altered. His noble Friend who sat near him had also charged him with desiring the overthrow of the Established Church; but he would appeal to the noble Lords who heard him, whether he had made use of a single remark to that effect. He was as attached to the Protestant religion as any noble Lord in that House, and he was anxious for its extension; but there was a great difference, he said, between the religion and the Church Establishment. He considered that a portion of the endowments of the Establishment should be appropriated to teach the people of Ireland that religion to which they belonged. He hoped that he had made himself understood, and that he would not be again charged with having wished to effect the overthrow of the Established Church.

On the Question, their Lordships divided:—Contents 17; Non-contents 61: Majority 44.

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House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 23, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS. — 1° Indemnity; Customs Duties.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Inhabitants of the Borough of Rochdale, for the Total and Immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws.—By Mr. Du Pre and Mr. Rashleigh, from an immense number of places in Bucks and Cornwall, against the proposed Government Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Bankers, Merchants, and Manufacturers, of Manchester and Liverpool, for a Speedy Adjustment of the proposed Measure respecting Customs and Corn Importation.—From Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Forres, for Repeal of Inventory Duty.—By Mr. James Morrison, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Burgh of Inverness, in favour of Burghs (Scotland) Bill.—By Admiral Dundas, from Builders and Householders of the Town and Parish of Woolwich, for Repeal or Alteration of the Metropolitan Buildings Act.—By Mr. James Morrison, from Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Nairne, for Alteration of Prisons (Scotland) Act.

AMALGAMATION OF RAILWAYS.

MR. J. W. PATTEN moved, pursuant to notice—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider how far, and under what regulations, the further Amalgamation of Railways would be consistent with a due regard to the commercial and general interests of the Country."

In making this Motion, he was influenced by no undue jealousy of railway promoters; on the contrary, he believed that railway companies generally, so far from deserving the jealousy or censure of that House for any of their arrangements, were a most liberal body of men, and were entitled to the greatest praise for the anxiety they had shown to meet the wishes of the public. It was not his object either to disparage the amalgamation of railways in general, believing that, under proper restrictions and regulations, those amalgamations might be rendered not only not injurious, but, in some instances, more beneficial to the promoters, and at the same time conducive to the general interests of the public. But the extent to which it was now proposed to carry railway amalgamations was such that, in his opinion, and in the opinion of the Members forming the Committee on which he had acted, it was highly desirable the House should be in possession of more accurate information and more enlightened opinion as to the result of these amalgamations, before it proceeded finally and irrevocably to commit itself to the step now proposed. There were now before the House no less than thirty-three Amalgamation Bills, comprising a great proportion of the railway communication of this country; and if these lines and their ramifications were carefully looked into, it would be found that they extended almost from one end of the country to the other, both in length and breadth. Some of these were separate Bills, which might be supposed only the particular district in which

it was proposed they should operate; but in some of these instances, two—sometimes three, and, in one or two instances, five or six—separate companies were proposed to be placed under one management, whereby the competition would be diminished on which the public had heretofore had to rely as a security for reasonable rates for traffic, and for commercial intercourse between one part of the country and another. Many of these Bills were likely to be opposed; and with reference to such, it would be possible to obtain sufficient and accurate information as to their general bearings upon the country. Others were not opposed, and to them public attention had not been drawn; for the public attention was more drawn just now towards new railway projects than to these Amalgamation Bills, which, not having to go through the same Standing Orders, were apt to pass through the House before the parties affected by them were at all aware of the effect they would have upon commerce. Not only in railways was this taking place, but in canals: he held in his hand a list of canals which it was proposed to amalgamate with railways. The object of this was most manifest; the old system of carriage, water carriage, had been found to be so inconvenient a competitor with railways, that it had become absolutely necessary for the one to buy up the other, and for the two to be amalgamated under one company. He did not say that this was necessarily an evil, for he knew of instances where it had been conducive to the public interests for railways and canals to be united; at the same time, it required the most careful examination before the House permitted such things to take place. It was quite obvious that a canal would not be bought up by a railway, nor a railway by canal, unless with a view to the increase of profits, by raising the rates of carriage on one or the other. Such was the importance of this question, that if the House did not place proper restrictions and regulations on these companies, there would very soon be a connected link of communication from one end of the country to the other, which would for ever put a stop to competition. There was now a Bill before the House, which, when looked into, appeared to establish a connected link from Scotland to the city of London in one direction, and from Scotland to Bristol in the other, almost all under the same control. And it was quite clear that, unless provision was made in these Bills, giving other parties the power of running on these lines, or taking advantage of them in some other way, it would be almost useless for Parliament to authorize a company to make a competing line; in fact, it would be almost impossible for a company to raise sufficient capital for such a purpose. This was sufficient to prove to the House that the system of amalgamation, as now going on, should be closely and carefully watched. Then came the question, how this could be most efficiently done? It had appeared to the Committee, of whom he had the honour to be Chairman, that in one of two ways alone could this be effected—either by leaving these Bills to be dealt with by the Group Committees, or by referring them to a Select Committee. The objection to the Group Committees was, that they could only get the necessary information in those cases where the amalgamations were opposed; without obtaining power from the House, they could not compel the production of papers and witnesses; and many railway companies would consider it unfair to saddle them with the expense of witnesses not necessary for their particular cases. If the hon. Member the Chairman of the Committee of Selection could have formed a Group Committee of Members who would have carried with them the confidence of the House on a question of such importance, and power had been given them to send for papers and witnesses, he, for one, should have been perfectly satisfied. At the same time, that would be an unusual mode of dealing. Then came the question, whether the subject was one that could properly be referred to the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Morrison). To this he should not object, provided the hon. Member for Inverness would consent to take the subject of amalgamations into consideration at the commencement of the sittings of his Committee; because it was extremely important that no unjust delay should take place. But if these Bills could not come on while towards the middle or the end of that Committee's proceedings. it might occasion their being put off for this Session. Therefore, by the advice of the Committee on which he had the honour to serve, he had given notice of the present Motion. The chief object of the Committee was to obtain from those parts of the country chiefly interested in those amalgamations that information which the House was not yet in possession of. It was true the House was in possession of

information which it had most sadly neglected, and not treated with the deference it deserved—the Report of the Board of Trade of last Session, which was well worthy the consideration of every Committee of the House. Had the Committees of last Session paid a little more attention to that Report, they would have done their duty more effectually to the public; he knew instances where neglect of attention to the recommendations of that Report had involved very serious consequences to the parties. The House had not thought fit last Session to attend to that Report, and had passed measures in direct contravention of it; and there was no reason to believe that the House had changed its mind. It was, therefore, chiefly on these considerations, and believing that the House was in want of further information, that he brought forward his Motion.

Mr. ENTWISLE said, it appeared to him highly desirable that some rule should be laid down by the House, in order that railway companies might know, before their application to Parliament, on what grounds they were to proceed in order that their measures might pass. It would be found on investigation that the acts of amalgamation proposed were, in many instances—he might almost say, most of them—of a purely defensive character. He was sure that, if such a Committee were formed, the principles laid down by them would be not only beneficial to the companies interested in the different amalgamations, but also to the country generally. He would most cordially support the Motion of the hon. Member for North Lancashire.

Sir G. CLERK said, that the question to which the Member for North Lancashire called the attention of the House was one of paramount importance, because, as was said in a discussion arising out of the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, unless they were now prepared to take certain precautions against the abuse of those powers which Government granted to railway companies, in the course of a few years they would find all means of communication vested in the hands of certain companies who would be placed beyond the control of the Legislature. But he confessed that though he thought it desirable that a Committee should be formed for the purpose of laying down certain principles of railway legislation, yet he did not gather from the speech of his hon. Friend what appeared to him (Sir G. Clerk) to be the object of the investigation of the proposed Select Committee. If the Select Committee should lay down certain general rules under which they would permit certain railway companies to amalgamate, and stated certain circumstances under which they would not allow them to do so, he (Sir G. Clerk) thought that they would be doing little more than giving their particular sanction to the principles laid down in the Twenty-first Report of the Board of Trade last year. If that was the object of his hon. Friend, it would be extremely desirable. After having done that, and after having adopted the principles laid down in the Report of the Board of Trade, they could not throw any objection to the amalgamation of lines having the same interests; but when the lines were not identified, and where the interests of the companies who projected them were opposed to each other, and where a company would be induced, under the fear of competition, to combine with another for the purpose of self-defence, in order to maintain a monopoly with the existing company, and to rivet that monopoly closer, it was quite clear that in such a case the interests of that company and the interests of the public might be at variance. His great difficulty was the manner in which these general rules, after being laid down, should be applied in each individual case. It would depend on the peculiar circumstances of each case. He was afraid that his hon. Friend would only be able to get over the first part of his object, namely, to call the attention of the House to the recommendation of the Board of Trade last year. He (Sir G. Clerk) hoped that, before whatever tribunal the decision of each individual case should come, that tribunal would look with extreme jealously to all those proposals of amalgamation, because it was impossible, in the present state of railway speculation, to know what might be the effect of those amalgamations some years hence. He thought that the objection of the Board of Trade was a just and a sound one, namely, the inconvenience that would arise from a premature decision on the proposed amalgamations. One advantage would arise from a postponement of the decision on the proposed amalgamations, for there were many modes in which an amalgamation might take place by private arrangement, which did not involve that necessary degree of permanence which arose from Parliamentary sanction. He therefore hoped that, after a Committee should

be appointed to act upon the principles established by the Select Committee, they would look with extreme jealousy to those proposals. The Board of Trade pointed out strong objections to extensive amalgamations last year. Their recommendations were carried into effect, and their suggestions as to the great public inconvenience that might arise from extensive amalgamations had their due weight. If the House did not not believe that the Committee, which was moved for by the hon. Member for Inverness, would have under its consideration a sufficiently wide field of inquiry, he thought that this subject might be very fairly submitted to them. But, considering the number of questions which they had to deal with, he was inclined to support the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire.

MR. F. T. BARING agreed with the right hon. Baronet that this subject was one, no doubt, of great difficulty and importance. The question, however, embraced two points: first, how they ought to lay down rules for the present Session; and, secondly, how they ought to provide for future cases. He doubted, with regard to Railway Bills now before the House, whether another proposition would not provide a better plan, namely, that of selecting a Committee of five, to whom all Amalgamation Bills should be referred, and giving them the power, in cases of unopposed Bills, of sending for witnesses, and of communicating with the Board of Trade. If the Committee now moved for were appointed, the House would perhaps get no Report this Session, or at best a very hurried Report, which could be of no present use. The right hon. Baronet (Sir G. Clerk) had said, that the Report of the Board of Trade last year had not been sufficiently attended to by the House. That very Report stated, as to laying down general rules for amalgamation, that "nothing could be more difficult than to lay down any general principles by which all amalgamations should be regulated." They would have the same uncertainty now; and he was afraid they could not settle the rules for amalgamation until they had settled the general principles of railway legislation. If they were prepared to rely upon the principle of competition alone, then following that one principle, they must reject all amalgamations; for if they allowed amalgamation at all, they violated the principle of competition. But if they reserved some power of Ministerial interference, adopting something of the French system, they need not be so jealous. He thought the Amalgamation Committee would report that it was impossible to lay down any general rules till they got the Report of the other Committee. His impression was, that the appointment of Committees, and the attempt to legislate through Committees, would produce inefficient legislation; and that it was proper to compel the Government to take this as well as other subjects under their consideration, and to bring forward measures for regulating railway legislation upon their own responsibility as a Government. Till then they would have only inefficient legislation upon this subject. It was natural that the Government should prefer to devolve this duty upon Committees of this House, rather than take it upon themselves, as it was a very awkward subject to deal with; but he believed that until the House determined that Government should undertake it, they would get only inefficient legislation. He did not object to the Committee, but he should have preferred the other course.

SIR R. PEEL said, the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that Her Majesty's Government had neglected the great subject of railway legislation. [MR. BARING: No, no!] He thought that the House ought to share this reproach with the Government. He only wished that hon. Members would read the able Report on this subject made by the Committee of the Board of Trade last year. The Board laid down certain principles, which they considered proper to be applied to cases of amalgamation brought before Parliament, admitting that there were cases in which it might be for the public advantage that they should be relaxed; and there was no doubt there were cases in which amalgamation, under proper conditions, would be for the advantage of the public, as well as of the railway companies. The recommendations of the Board of Trade, however, were not acceded to by the House; and he only asked the House to share the reproach of the present state of things with the Government. The House was actually jealous of the interference of the Government; the House overruled, in many cases, the decisions of the Board of Trade, and it would perceive in this a reason why Her Majesty's Government wished that the interference of the Executive should be called for by a decision of the House of Commons as necessary for the public interests,

rather than it should, a second time, interfere on its own Motion. He could not help thinking that there was some difficulty in adopting the proposition of his hon. Friend (Mr. W. Patten). The House had adopted the Motion of the hon. Member for Inverness; and if they had another Committee to consider the principles of amalgamation, he feared they might have different reports from each, and a conflict of opinions. They had adopted a proposition with respect to railways that had termini within the city of London and the metropolis, to reserve them for a separate inquiry by a Commission appointed by the Crown; and perhaps it might not be inexpedient to pursue a similar course here, by appointing a Committee not a Commission, on the subject of amalgamation, so far as regarded Bills now presented; that a Committee should be appointed to consider, not the principles of amalgamation generally, but a Special Committee to consider Bills now introduced, in which amalgamation is proposed, and to suggest such general principles as seemed most applicable to such cases. This would not bring the Committee into conflict with the Committees of the hon. Member for Inverness; and he feared that, unless a distinct line were drawn between the Committee now moved for and that of the hon. Member for Inverness, there might be a conflict of opinion, which would involve the House in great difficulty.

Mr. F. MAULE wished to call the attention of the House to a difficulty which existed. The Committee moved for by his hon. Friend (Mr. Patten), and the one appointed on the Motion of the Member for Inverness, ought to be kept distinct, and the report of the one ought not to interfere with that of the other. The difficulty which he saw was, that the opinions of the Committee now moved for might clash with those of the Group Committees, who were to decide on the proposed amalgamations. In his opinion the Committee of his hon. Friend should lay down certain rules of amalgamation, and the Group Committees would consider the proposals subject to those rules. From what he had seen of the Amalgamation Bills before the House this present Session, it appeared to him quite clear that all further progress in them should be suspended until the House should come to some defined determination.

Viscount EBRINGTON said, that they ought to recollect that amalgamation was a voluntary act, and that there was nothing to hinder companies from amalgamating before the House came to a determination. The question of amalgamation depended on a principle of the appropriation of fixed capital embarked in railways, or on the principle of taking some security against monopoly. The hon. Member for Lancashire complained that no attention was paid to the Report of the Committee last year; but would the hon. Member allow him to remind the hon. Member that he was the first to surrender the Report? Other hon. Members were greatly impressed with the weight and importance that attached to it, and thought that the Government ought to give it their serious attention. He thought the most complete surrender of the Reports of the Board of Trade, and of the noble Lord who had displayed so much ability in drawing them up, had proceeded from Her Majesty's Government. The blame of not attending to the Report of the Board of Trade should not be thrown on the House generally, when the Government were the first to throw over the laborious and very able investigations of that body.

Sir R. PEEL said, the noble Lord was labouring under a great mistake in supposing that the Government had interfered with respect to any Private Bill. When it became a question whether the Government, as a Government, should interfere with a Private Bill, although it had been recommended by a Committee, and had received the sanction of the Board of Trade, he should be sorry to see such interference. But when there was a question between the promoters of two Bills before Parliament, and the opinion of the Board of Trade itself was to be supported, he remembered coming down to support the decision of the Board of Trade.

Viscount EBRINGTON alluded to an early discussion which took place at the commencement of the Session.

Mr. H. HINDE would have liked to have seen the weight of the Government displayed more energetically in favour of the recommendations of the Board of Trade, which he thought were made with great judgment and discretion. He thought that the suggestion which had been just thrown out by the right hon. Baronet would remove a great many of the objections which he had entertained to the proposition of his hon. Friend the Member for North Lancashire; but he considered it would be a still greater improvement if the proposed Committee were made to per-

form the functions of the Committees on the several Bills. He thought it would be a hardship to call upon parties to make out their case before the Preliminary Committee, and then oblige them to do the same thing over again before another tribunal. There would be a double investigation, and a double expense, and the parties would have just cause of complaint.

SIR G. GREY thought the Government ought not to interfere in ordinary cases with a private Bill. If rules were laid down for the amalgamation of Private Bills by the Board of Trade, he was sure that the House would be disposed to support such rules, and have its Committees guided by them. It would be well to have rules laid down for the purpose of securing uniformity. If a general principle was laid down and sanctioned by the House, the Committees would have little difficulty in acting upon it. If there was a preliminary Committee which performed its functions as the Board of Trade did last year, that Committee might take a view of all the Amalgamation Bills, and say whether they could not come within general rules. If that was done, there would be no necessity for discussion on the second reading; and he hoped the inquiries of the Committee would be limited to some particular object.

MR. PAKINGTON, as a Member of the Classification Committee, begged to say that the object of that Committee, in bringing the matter before the House, was to call its attention to the magnitude of the subject. The question of amalgamation was one of the most important connected with the whole railway subject, especially as the present proposed amalgamations exceeded in extent anything of the kind proposed before, for there were no less than thirty-three Amalgamation Bills. He was quite willing to adopt the course recommended by the right hon. Baronet.

MR. P. M. STEWART thought the Amalgamation Bills should be grouped together, and a competent Committee of five appointed, who should determine on the merits of the Bills, instead of subjecting the Amalgamation Bills to a second and remote trial hereafter. He would suggest that all the Amalgamation Bills should be extracted from the groups in which they had been placed, and that one group should be made of them, which should be referred to the Committee he had just suggested, who should go into the merits and demerits of these Amalgamation Bills, and decide their fate by making a Report to the House.

MR. MORRISON thought that a railway which came before Parliament, and proposed an amalgamation with another, should, to a certain extent, be treated as a new line, and Parliament should impose any conditions it thought proper for the security and benefit of the public. Some general regulations should be applied to all railways; amongst others uniformity of fares for passengers, and of charges for the carriage of goods, &c. He considered that Parliament had a right to deal with amalgamations as it thought fit, and to impose upon them whatever new conditions it thought proper.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that the question before the House was, how were they to deal with those Amalgamation Bills which were before the House during the present Session? He confessed, after the discussion which had taken place, that he agreed with his right hon. Friend the Member for Devonport, that the House had better not appoint any Committee to consider that question; the question respecting amalgamations generally was one of importance, and, for his own part, he was inclined to think that railroads, like other things, were likely to be managed better on a great scale than otherwise. But that was not the question. The question was, how they were to deal with the amalgamations actually before the House in the present Session of Parliament? He thought they could not have a safer guide than the principles laid down in the Report presented to the House two Sessions ago. He would prefer leaving the matter in the hands of the Government to those of the House.

MR. T. DUNCOMBE thought that some principles should be laid down for the guidance of Committees with respect to amalgamations. There were two kinds of amalgamations—those which were made for the public interest, and those which were made for private benefit. With respect to the latter, the House ought to interpose. Supposing, for instance, that the London and Birmingham, or the Eastern Counties Company, were to buy up the London and York, if it were made, that would be no amalgamation for the benefit of the public, but the giving a monopoly to whoever had the longest purse.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that he agreed with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. It

was difficult to lay down any general rules for the guidance of Committees with respect to Amalgamation Bills. He considered that it would have been better on the whole if the House had adhered to the rules laid down by the Board of Trade; but as the House had not adopted the views of the Board of Trade, it was the more necessary that the House should take the initiative in the matter. It might be for the public advantage in some cases that a short line should be amalgamated with a great line; but in other cases an amalgamation of a short line with an original line might be only to confirm a permanent monopoly. The course which appeared best to him was to appoint a Committee, in which the House would have confidence, to lay down general rules for the guidance of all Committees with respect to Amalgamation Bills. He did not think that such a Committee would interfere with the Committee of the hon. Member for Inverness.

MR. HUME would suggest that no more amalgamations should be permitted till the Committee had made its Report. He did not think that any mischief could be done by adopting such a course, but, on the contrary, great benefit might accrue from it. He thought they might be in the hands of a few monopolists sooner than they were aware of.

MR. COLLETT said, that the result of the amalgamation of the London and Birmingham and the Grand Junction Companies had been an immediate reduction of fares, which proved to be beneficial to all parties. He thought that the principle of amalgamation should be encouraged. He did not think there was any danger of monopoly, because railway directors now found it their interest to adopt the system of low fares.

LORD H. VANE thought that the adoption of the suggestion of the hon. Member for Montrose would be of the greatest advantage. When they saw railway companies possessing so much money that they would be likely to command the communication of the country, the House ought to be cautious how they sanctioned those Amalgamation Bills. He did not see how any evils could result from postponing Amalgamation Bills, even for the present Session.

MR. W. PATTEN said, that he had endeavoured to alter the terms of his Motion, so as to meet what he collected from the discussion to be the general feeling of the House. The words of the amended Motion were—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the principle of amalgamation as applied to the Railway and Canal Bills, now under the consideration of Parliament."

Amended Motion agreed to.

BUENOS AYRES AND MONTE VIDEO.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON said: I wish to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet of which I gave him notice, and it relates to a subject of very considerable importance to the commercial interests of this country —the state of our relations with the Republic of Buenos Ayres. We all know that for a considerable period British commerce has received great interruption in the River Plate, first by the war carried on between the Buenos Ayres Government and that of Monte Video, and lately in consequence of the measures taken by the British Government to put an end to that war. Transactions have taken place there of a very warlike description. The language of the Government, when asked upon this matter in Parliament, has been the language of peace; but the acts of our authorities there have certainly been acts of war. First of all, there has been established a maritime blockade; next there has been the landing of British troops upon the Argentine territory, and the storming of towns; then there has been the capture of Argentine vessels and the advertisement of them for sale as prizes taken in war. There has also been, I believe, an advertisement issued for the hire of shipping, to remove, at the public expense, from Buenos Ayres to the Cape of Good Hope, British subjects who had settled at Buenos Ayres relying on the faith of the existing treaties between the two countries. I apprehend that none of these transactions have arisen out of any demand made by the British Government for redress from Buenos Ayres for injuries done to British subjects or British property in violation of any treaty; and I also apprehend that our interference between Monte Video and Buenos Ayres is not the result of any guarantee we have given to Monte Video by treaty, nor the fulfilment of any obligation arising out of any treaty offensive and defensive concluded between this country and Monte Video. The only reason alleged in Parliament for this interference of the British Government, has been a desire to put an end to the war, which was thought

injurious to British interests. I will not go into that matter now. My question relates simply to the state of our relations with Buenos Ayres. I wish to know—and it is of importance to the commercial interests of the country that it should be explained—whether we are now at war with Buenos Ayres or not? If we are, it is fitting that the Government should communicate the fact to Parliament, and through Parliament to the country. If we are not at war with Buenos Ayres, and if there still exists between us and Buenos Ayres relations of peace, then what I would ask is, whether those belligerent acts committed in the River Plate by the British authorities were the result of instructions from the British Government at home, and, therefore, were sanctioned beforehand by our Government; or, if not so sanctioned beforehand, whether they have been approved by the British Government since the Government became acquainted with them? There has been laid on the Table of the House copies of the instructions sent to Mr. Ouseley; but I am obliged to confess that having read those instructions, I am unable to make out whether Mr. Ouseley and our military and naval authorities in the River Plate are or are not borne out by those instructions in the course which they have pursued. I ask, therefore, whether we are at war or at peace with Buenos Ayres; and, if we are at war with Buenos Ayres, why that fact has not been communicated? But if we are at peace with Buenos Ayres, then, I wish to know how those acts of war on the spot are to be reconciled with our pacific relations, and whether they have been approved of by Her Majesty's Government? I might add, that the inquiry is naturally suggested by the well-known aversion which Her Majesty's Government have to a little war, and by their great repugnance to any interference, without absolute necessity, in the affairs of other States.

SIR R. PEEL: Sir, I trust the noble Lord and the House will feel that no formal notice having been given upon this subject, it is much better I should limit myself, as far as I possibly can, to the questions of the noble Lord, than that I should provoke any discussion upon the state of our relations with Buenos Ayres and Monte Video. I propose, therefore, to avoid argument upon the subject, and to confine myself to the questions which the noble Lord was good enough to intimate he would put to me. I need scarcely remind him that it has been with great reluctance Her Majesty's Government has consented to any interference of a forcible nature in the affairs of Buenos Ayres and Monte Video; that for some years we were much pressed upon this subject, and that it was not until the evil had become almost intolerable that the Government took any course partaking of the character of a forcible proceeding. The House will bear in mind that it was at our mediation in the year 1828, that the independence of Monte Video was established. Brazil consented to that independence, and was a party to the Convention by which that independence was established. The circumstance of its independence being established on our mediation certainly gives no claim nor right to Monte Video to insist that we should guarantee that independence by force; but naturally, as that independence was established on our mediation, it gives us a peculiar interest in the maintenance of it; and the interests of this country are also, upon general considerations, very materially involved in the maintenance of the independence of the eastern part of the territory—the Republic of Uruguay. In the latter end of 1844, the Brazilian Government, which was a more immediate party to the Convention of 1828, represented to the Government of this country and to that of France, that the continuance of this war upon the shores of the River Plate was detrimental to the interests of all commercial countries; and Brazil earnestly intreated that a fresh effort should be made on the part of France and this country, and that they would interpose for the purpose of restoring tranquillity, and maintaining the independence of Monte Video. Efforts had frequently been made in preceding years; and I think, in the year 1841, the noble Lord himself offered the mediation of this country to the two contending Powers, and that offer was accepted by Monte Video, and rejected by Buenos Ayres. France and England again made a joint offer of this nature; and again it was accepted by Monte Video, and rejected by Buenos Ayres. The war has now continued six or seven years; and under the pressure of almost intolerable evils, this country and France, acting together in the most cordial union, determined to make an attempt to bring about peace between the two countries, and to secure the independence of Monte Video. They had no other object in view further than the restoration of peace, and each country disclaimed, with the utmost

sincerity, any desire to get any peculiar advantages for itself; and, as to getting any accession of territory, that of course was out of the question. The simple object was to interfere for the interests of humanity, and for the purpose of protecting the independence of Monte Video, and restoring that tranquillity which, greatly to the prejudice of peaceful commerce, had been interrupted for a period of six or seven years. They, therefore, sent a special mission. England and France, acting in concurrence, sent a special mission to these two countries, again tendering their interference, and again recommending to each the restoration of tranquillity, and the termination of hostilities, and offering their joint mediation for that purpose. The directions to the Ministers of the two countries were to exhaust every effort of amicable intercession with these two Governments, in order to effect the object in view. Their proposals were again, for the third or fourth time, accepted by Monte Video, and rejected by Buenos Ayres; but the two Governments had determined that, in the event of the rejection of amicable interference, they would then use forcible interference for the purpose of bringing about the termination of those hostilities. At the instance of the noble Lord, I presented, in the early part of the Session, the instructions which had been given by my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Mr. Ouseley, our Representative in that country, and the instructions given by the Government of France to their Representative were in conformity with those given by my noble Friend to the British Representative. I should state that the Papers I produced included two despatches from Lord Aberdeen, dated the 20th of February and the 5th of November, and that these included the whole of the instructions which had been given up to the 5th of November. There were no other instructions given having reference either to negotiations, or to forcible interference, which was contemplated as possibly necessary in the event of the failure of amicable interference. The noble Lord will observe from these two letters what were the instructions upon which the Representatives of the two Governments were acting up to the 5th November. These were the circumstances under which first offers of amicable mediation were made to the two Powers; and the noble Lord will see what were the circumstances under which, on the rejection of these offers, there was to be a qualified forcible intervention. I now propose to answer the questions of the noble Lord. First, are we now at war with Buenos Ayres? I consider that we are not. There has been no declaration of war. There is a blockade ordered by these instructions of certain ports in the River Plate belonging to Buenos Ayres; but I do not consider that the fact of the establishment of that blockade necessarily implies a state of war. The noble Lord will recollect that at that period when this country interfered with two other European Powers, for the purpose of effecting a separation of Greece from Turkey, and establishing the independence of Greece, there was a blockade of some of the ports of the Turkish Empire; and in that case we were not at war with Turkey. I am speaking now of the blockade of certain ports; and the fact of such blockade no more implies a state of war with Buenos Ayres than the blockade in the former case implied a war with Turkey. The noble Lord must also recollect the circumstance of the blockade of the Scheldt in 1831 instituted by the Government of which the noble Lord was a Member. There was at that time no declaration of war with Holland; vessels were seized as in the present case; and the forcible interference between Holland and Belgium was not considered tantamount to war. According to the instructions given them there has been a blockade established of certain ports of Buenos Ayres, and the seizure and occupation of an island in the River Plate, called Martin Garcia, as necessary to the progress of the operations. The noble Lord will observe that the instructions given to the Representatives of the two countries were, after the rejection of the offers of amicable interference, to establish a blockade of those ports which was most likely to compel the withdrawal of the Argentine forces under General Oribe from the territory of Monte Video, and to impede the hostile operations carried on by General Rosas against Monte Video; and in the event of further operations being necessary, to blockade Buenos Ayres itself. Those instructions were sanctioned; and that blockade has taken place. So far, then, for the first question of the noble Lord. Then the noble Lord asks, whether the operations of a hostile character on the banks of the River Parana have received the sanction of Her Majesty's Government? I have already stated that no other instructions were issued to the Representatives of

the two countries than those contained in the Papers laid on the Table, and, strange as it may seem, there has not yet been received a full and satisfactory explanation of the motives which led to that expedition that was sent up the Parana, and that led to a conflict with the forces of Buenos Ayres. I am bound to state that an expedition of that kind was not contemplated in the instructions given by Her Majesty's Government. The noble Lord, then, will not expect me to say anything more than that there was no previous sanction of that expedition in those instructions; and certainly such an expedition was not contemplated by Her Majesty's Government. With respect to the sale of prizes, I apprehend that point refers to the sale of vessels that were taken in the attempt to break the blockade. The admiral reports that the cargoes of those vessels were of a very perishable nature, and that he had not a sufficient number of men to spare to take them to a place of safe custody, and that it was the better for all parties to proceed to the sale of those vessels and their cargoes; that he did therefore do so; and that he kept the proceeds of the sale in charge for Her Majesty's Government. Then, with regard to the removal of some British subjects, I think the noble Lord labours under an erroneous impression with regard to that transaction. It is true that some subjects of Her Majesty, residing at Buenos Ayres, who were alarmed for their personal security, left Buenos Ayres and came to Monte Video. Being in great distress, they applied to our Minister there, Mr. Ouseley, for his protection and assistance; but their removal was entirely voluntary on their part. Mr. Ouseley attempted to find employment for them in Monte Video, and made an appeal to Her Majesty's subjects there to provide temporary employment for them, as far as possible; but as many of them were agriculturists, and Monte Video was then in a state of siege, this was found to be impossible. Mr. Ouseley, therefore, thought it would be for their advantage to remove them, some to the Cape, and some to the Falkland islands; but this was done with perfect consent and good-will on their part. I believe I have now answered the noble Lord's questions, as far as I can without entering upon a discussion which would not be advantageous for the public interest.

LORD J. RUSSELL did not wish to enter upon a general discussion on this subject; but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would, as soon as possible, afford them further information respecting it. Like his noble Friend, he did not understand in what manner Mr. Ouseley was to act, what answer he got when he arrived in the neighbourhood of Buenos Ayres, or what terms had been actually proposed to the Government of Buenos Ayres, and had been refused by that Government. The right hon. Gentleman said we were not at war, and undoubtedly a blockade did not constitute war. But he believed ships had been taken and ordered for sale, and, as the right hon. Gentleman stated, these were belligerent operations, and such as he thought would require some Order in Council to justify the admiral who had so acted. With respect to the British troops engaged in the expedition, Lord Aberdeen's instructions were, that they were not to be disembarked or to engage in any operations beyond what were requisite for the occupation of a particular island, "or for the security of the combined forces, or the success of the expedition." That was a large authority, and it was proper the House should know in what respect the military operations were necessary.

SIR R. H. INGLIS said, he had two other questions to ask on the same subject. About two centuries ago the Dutch sailed up the Medway, much in the same manner in which Her Majesty's fleet sailed up the River Plate. He would ask, whether that was considered war? Subsequently another fleet, being the combined squadrons of Russia, France, and England, blockaded another fort, entered another harbour, and destroyed another fleet—namely, the fleet of Turkey. Was that considered war? He could see no distinction between these cases. Would it satisfy the friends of peace to say that we were not at war, when ships were taken, and many lives lost in the gallant achievements of Captain Hotham and his friend Captain Hope? Would it satisfy the Quakers to be told that, when all the circumstances of war occurred, as at Navarino and in the Medway, when there was so much loss of human life, and the capture of an enemy's ships, this was all done, and yet that we were in a state of profound peace? He was at a loss to know what was war, if this was not.

SIR R. PEEL: The records of the year 1827 will show that the action fought at Navarino did not constitute war between Turkey

and England. I understood the noble Lord to ask whether there had been any declaration of war between Buenos Ayres and England, and whether we were at war or at peace with that country. My reply was, that a blockade had been established, in virtue of the instructions given to the British Minister; that a blockade did not necessarily amount to a state of war; and that, speaking of the international relations of the two countries, we are not at war with Buenos Ayres. It is impossible to deny that whatever responsibility attaches to the late operations, rests with Her Majesty's Government and with their Representative, Mr. Ouseley; and that the gallant officers, sailors, and marines engaged in the expedition, are entitled to all the credit of their bravery, whatever may be thought of the policy of the instructions of the Government. I share in that admiration of the gallantry and spirit of the combined forces which has been already expressed; and I also look with great satisfaction upon the cordial union which existed between the two serrvices. I am not prepared at present to enter upon the present state of our relations with Buenos Ayres. There may be an amicable adjustment of the questions at issue, and peace may be restored. I am not prepared to lay any Papers upon the Table at present; but as soon as any information can be communicated to the House, I shall be happy to lay it before them.

Subject at an end.

CUSTOMS AND CORN IMPORTATION REPORT.

The Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Corn Importation Bill was then read.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I have two petitions to present to the House; one from Liverpool, in which the petitioners state that the commercial interests of the country are materially prejudiced by the delay of the Legislature in pronouncing a decision in regard to the commercial measures now before them. I am assured that no petition ever left Liverpool more respectably signed; that it received the signatures of the leading men of all political parties; and that some of them are those of gentlemen who have been opposed to our measures, but who now give in their adhesion to the proposals of the Government. The petition received in the course of a few hours 414 signatures of the leading gentlemen in Liverpool. Every banking-house in Liverpool, I am told, but with three exceptions, has signed it; the managing directors of two of these being out of town. About 214 merchants and shipowners, and 190 brokers, have signed. The petition, which states that the petitioners, having the most extensive experience, find that nearly every branch of trade is paralysed by the delay in carrying the measures of the Government. It further states—

> "That your petitioners, while they disclaim all interference with due deliberation in matters of such vast importance, would humbly pray that an end may be put to their suspense by passing into a law, as speedily as possible, the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government, and which your petitioners verily believe will prove highly beneficial to the interests of this vast commercial Empire."

The other petition is from Manchester. This received its signatures in twenty-four hours, and has 1,122 signatures attached to it. It is signed by all the bankers in Manchester, and by fifty-five members of the town-council. It is also signed by most of the large houses engaged in the manufacturing and spinning trade, in the machine-making in the country trade, and in the East and West Indian, Canadian, United States, German, Russian, and Mediterranean trades. I am informed that the amount of capital represented by the houses who have signed this petition is 30,000,000*l.* and that the number of persons employed by them is 120,000. The petitioners state that—

> "In common with the entire manufacturing and commercial interests of the country, they have observed with the liveliest satisfaction the wise and comprehensive measures introduced by Her Majesty's Government—measures which will tend greatly to benefit this densely-populated district."

The petitioners, therefore, pray the House

> "To put an end to the doubt and uncertainty now existing, and to prevent the occurrence of commercial disasters which may seriously cripple the industry and resources of the country, by immediately passing into a law the Customs and Corn Importation Act."

On the Question that the Bill be now read a Second Time,

Mr. E. YORKE said, he might well have been deterred by the difficulty of this subject from taking such a prominent part in it; but he was warned by the petition which he held in his hand, signed as it had been by an immense number of his most influential constituents interested in agriculture, not as he had heretofore done, to give a silent vote upon the question, lest the truth of the opinion he held, as to the

principle of protection, should be brought into doubt, and the sincerity of the professions he had made be suspected. His intention was to move, that this Bill be read a second time that day six months. If hon. Gentlemen on his side the House felt as he did, he would entreat them not to be deterred by what had taken place, but that every form of the House should be used, every rule which the forms of Parliament suggested, should be adopted in order to defeat this measure. In approaching this subject he must say, that he preferred experience to conjecture—that which they knew to that which they were taught. He thought that a matter of such deep importance to the people of this country as the providing them with a cheap supply of food should not be treated as matter of hypothetical speculation. If one link of their speculations should fail—if one postulate should not answer their anticipations—if the deductions which they drew should be scarcity and famine, instead of plenty, they would have committed a grievous error, which a life of repentance, however sincere, could not sufficiently atone for. He rejected the Bill because it was a step taken to overturn a principle which had hitherto been recognized invariably by the people of this country as identified with its best interests—because issue had been joined with regard to it on a late occasion with the antagonist party in the State when that principle was recognized and adopted by a large majority of the constituency—who returned a majority of their representatives in favour of that principle—and made those who now sat on the Treasury bench, the organs or conservators of it. He objected to the Bill, because it was intended to repeal law which was based upon that principle of protection, and which its authors proclaimed to be intended to give the people, irrespective of class interest—independent of the remunerative price to the farmers—the first necessaries of life at a cheap rate. He found that the price which now obtained in this country, and which had obtained for some time, was precisely that which was calculated by the right hon. Baronet as the price that marked abundance and sufficiency, instead of scarcity; and he believed that so great was the skill and enterprise of the people of this country, that the present law, if it had not been interfered with, would in a short time have repealed itself, to the great advantage of this country. But they were told that this law was an error—that the time of repentance was now come, and that the recantation of this error was the only thing that was necessary for the prosperity of this nation. But was it possible, he would ask, that that could be an error in 1846, which was denied to be so in 1842? Was that to be called an error, in a time of great commercial prosperity and general contentment, which was denied to be so in a period of great manufacturing depression? If the result of this measure in 1842 were sedition and discontent, why did they not then attempt to conciliate the affections of the people, by giving up this obnoxious law? It had been stated, in the course of these debates, that no apprehensions were entertained by the agricultural body. Now, he represented a district which was entirely and purely agricultural, and, from his position having had on many occasions to defend the political honour of the right hon. Gentleman—which he did with as much zeal as he would have defended his own private integrity—he had been placed at issue, on more occasions than one, with the body which he represented; and he knew pretty well what their sentiments were on this occasion. The district he represented was about twenty miles in extent, with about 300,000 acres, which was originally one vast morass, inhabited by the winged denizens of the moor and by lawless men; but now it was a happy and fertile district, being one of the greatest corn-growing districts in the kingdom, as authentic returns would show. To obtain this agricultural eminence they had to contend with great natural disadvantages, both by land and water; and to surmount these difficulties, he was informed that not less than five millions sterling had been laid out upon the land. That amount had been laid out in the faith that protection would be continued. But for that the lands would never have been cultivated. He urged this particularly with a view to show that the charge of laziness and indolence brought against the agricultural body was not an honest nor a fair charge. Even now the annual expenditure upon that land was about 80,000*l.*, the local taxes for that purpose varying from 3*s.* to 20*s.* in the pound. This was not done to enhance the value of the land—it was done for the sake of security, for there was not a moment in which the waters of the district might not inundate them, and destroy not only the hopes of the agriculturist, but all the benefits which were at present conferred

upon the country through the civilization and cultivation of the district. He had received several letters upon this subject from men practically acquainted with the subject, with which he must trouble the House, in order to show how the measure would affect them if the prices were reduced, which he could show would be the case, not perhaps this year or the next, because the employment of railways had placed an increased consumption of food within every man's reach; but when this enormous demand for labour was withdrawn, and the labour market had returned to its former level, then the trial of this measure would come, and it would be for them and for the world to judge whether it were successful. One gentleman with whom he was well acquainted, said, that the effect of this measure would be to reduce rents one half, and that it would destroy the tenants' capital to the extent of two-thirds. It was difficult to say how it would operate upon labour, as the drainage of the district must be maintained; but it would certainly be reduced to the extent of one-third. Another gentleman mentioned that he knew a farmer in the district who intended to drain a large portion of his farm this year; but he had stopped when he heard of Sir Robert Peel's propositions, as he was quite certain that if those measures passed, the outlay would not be repaid. That farmer considered there would be no alteration of prices this year, though he did not believe there was such a deficiency as was apprehended; but if the harvest of next year should be an average one, the price of wheat would be 40*s.* to 45*s.* per quarter, labourers' wages would be reduced 2*s.* a week, and many would be altogether thrown out of employment. To show that there was great ground for apprehending a fall in the price of wheat, he might state that a gentleman who was well known in Gloucestershire, had recently mentioned that he had imported a quantity of white wheat from Odessa, which, after all expenses were paid, stood him in 37*s.* a quarter. Now, it was impossible for British agriculturists to compete with such prices as these. He found, from calculations made some years ago, when wheat was 56*s.* a quarter, that the cost of manual labour which entered into the growth of a quarter of wheat, from the time it was sown till it was brought to market, was 17*s.* 2*d.* a quarter. With regard to the burdens on land, he might state that he had received a letter from a gentleman, who had transferred his capital from this country to France, that he had obtained land as good as the generality of our northern soils; and that, under the four-course system, he found that the burdens on that land were only 21*s.* 6*d.* per acre. Now, it was well known that the burdens on land in this country amounted to 60*s.* per acre. He would ask, then, how was it possible for either landlord or tenant to farm his land under a system of unrestricted competition, when there was so much difference between this country and neighbouring ones? It had been asked what good had the farmers derived from protection? He thought what he had already stated was a sufficient answer to that question. But he recollected well, that in 1822 Dantzic wheat was selling at 30*s.* a quarter. The British farmer was, at that time, in a state of deep distress; but it was the protection against the introduction of this and other wheat that saved him from utter and entire ruin. In a pamphlet which was published by a gentleman whom he knew very well—one of the most practical farmers in the country—it was stated that the loss a farmer, on a farm of 400 acres, would sustain by protection was 347*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*, while his loss by free trade would be 826*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*, making a gain in favour of protection of 478*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.* a year. He had other calculations from other farmers, to the same effect; one of them in particular, showing that he would lose, by the proposed measure, about 95*l.* more than his entire rent, for which Sir Robert Peel offered, by way of compensation, about 1*d.* an acre. It had also been shown that the rate of mortality was greater at a time of a low price of corn than at other periods. Pauperism had been found, beyond the slightest possible doubt, to increase during a season of low prices. Mr. Tooke had also shown the effect of periods of low prices to have been inimical to property. Nor was it alone the records of modern times that showed this effect; for, in the records of the British Museum, in the Papers of Sir Simond D'Ewes, of the date of 1641, the same evils were spoken of. As regarded the operation of the intended measure, what he would ask, was the effect it was supposed it would produce? Was the measure intended to produce high prices or low prices? The intended object surely could not be the production of a high price, because that would not suit the views of

the manufacturers. Still he had a right to conclude that the Ministry desired high prices, because their arguments went to support that point. Relaxation, they said, had shown an increase of price. They had quoted articles where relaxation of duty had caused the rise of price; but he could not avoid noticing that the Ministers, while quoting these articles, had most carefully abstained from naming corn, and had only noticed those articles which were capable of being manufactured. Now, if the Ministerial argument was correct, it should stand thus—that the relaxation of price tended to make articles dear, and that total removal tended to make them dear also. If the argument were applied to corn, the House would see the nature of the change that must follow, that was, if the argument were correct. But it was said, the aim of the change was to obtain a moderate price; but the answer to that would be found in the operation of the present law, which produced moderate prices. Therefore, the alteration of that law was not required; and, indeed, many hon. Members of that House had placed the whole question in its proper light. The hon. Member for Birmingham had said that protection had considerably supported labour. But he could quote another authority likely to be heard on one side of the House at least, no less a man than Earl Fitzwilliam, a great agriculturist; and the opinion of the noble Lord was, that without protection the farmer would be ruined and the labourer starved. He (Mr. Yorke) should scarcely have thought it necessary to extend his observations; but as much of the introduction of the present measures might be attributable to a moneyed combination out of that House, he wished to say he should be ready to resist the attacks of that body as much as possible, and give his opposition to the measure of Corn Law repeal. He would refer to the feelings of the poor with respect to the anticipated measure. Did hon. Members of the House find themselves acquainted with the feelings of the poorer classes? Many persons held the opinion, that nothing was to be dreaded from the feelings of the labourer. If such was the opinion, hon. Gentlemen were highly mistaken. On that question—the question of the feeling of the labourers—he had received a communication from a poor, but intelligent man, who said that in the neighbourhood from which he wrote, there was not a village in which the people were not ready to assert, by brute force, if necessary, their right to taste of the fruits of their own labour; and he added that every village in the vicinity was ripe for outrage at the first reduction of wages. The working classes, be it remembered, were well tutored by the press—by such papers as the *Dispatch*, and other publications of a similar nature. He assured the House that great apprehensions existed in the agricultural districts as to the effects of this measure; and he held the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury bench responsible for occasioning those apprehensions. It was too much for the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) to say, that he confessed his share in that responsibility, and to plead that such a confession should shield him from punishment. This was the first time he (Mr. Yorke) had ever heard that a confession of guilt was an indemnity against punishment. It was true that the fact of confession was often taken into consideration by a Judge, and, combined with proof of previous good character, afforded a reason for mitigation of punishment; but this was the first time he had heard that a confession of guilt was a ground of exemption from punishment; and certainly the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the criminal law of this country ought to be the last person to introduce such a principle. He did not hesitate to say that, if this experiment should fail, Her Majesty's Ministers would be exposed to the heavy and severe denunciation of those whom they had betrayed. A measure of this enormous change should not be allowed to become law without a searching investigation. Bad as the change would be on agriculture generally, what, he would inquire, would be the effect on the titheowner, whose income had been fixed upon the price of corn some years since. Look also at other relations. The Property Tax assessment reached 200,000,000*l.*; but this taxation had not been properly or fairly distributed. A fairer distribution, therefore, should be made of the burdens of this tax. All should bear taxation, and bear it equally, and, reminded by proceedings which sometimes took place in a locality in the county he represented, he would say, if the House would permit him, that the nation should be handicapped, and the burdens it had to bear be placed on those who were able to bear them, in order that all might start fairly upon the great national race they were appointed to run. The whole fiscal regulations should be changed if the pre-

sent measure passed, and abundant reasons existed for a sweeping change of this character. A well-known public writer, Mr. John Macgregor, stated, that the Excise law, as it stood, might be changed for the good of the nation at large, as also the poor and other laws now pressing so heavily on the community. He would not therefore give his support to the measure of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government without a complete remodelling of taxation. When the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) the Member for the city of London, in 1829, first brought forward his plan of a fixed duty, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, referring to the Tithe Commutation Act, told the noble Lord that if, when he passed that Act, he had any intention of altering the basis on which it was framed, he was guilty of a gross fraud on the public. And now, adopting the same language, he would tell Her Majesty's Ministers, if, in 1842, when the Corn Bill of that year was passed, they had any intention of altering the basis on which it was framed—and he had come to the conclusion that they had all along been arguing against their convictions—they were guilty of a gross fraud on the country. He wished hon. Gentlemen opposite joy of their new allies on the Treasury benches. They would use them for the purpose of striking this one blow, and when struck they would discard them, having no trust in the metal of which they were composed. The right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury looked to posterity for indemnity, and no doubt the pen of the faithful historian would do him justice. The historian would say of him, that, gifted with great natural and possessing many acquired powers, notwithstanding some slight deviation in former years from the straight course of political wisdom, he was again trusted on account of his professions by a great party, whom he again deceived. He would say that he stood alone against the party he had betrayed ;—

> " He stood alone amidst his band,
> Without one trusting heart or hand."

In conclusion, he begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Sir J. Y. BULLER hoped the House would not think he was intruding on its time, if, on the present occasion, he occupied it for a few minutes. In the year 1842, he supported the proposals of the Government, and he had done so because he had felt that it was for the advantage of the country; and he had believed that those interests which had been then affected, would not again be subjected to change. Certainly he had presumed that no further alteration would take place while the right hon. Baronet continued in office. When he had heard of further alterations, he had deeply deprecated them. He felt the greatest disappointment that further change should have been meditated, nor had he yet recovered from his disappointment, though taking the course he intended to take. The hon. Member who had just addressed the House, had stated that the constituencies of the country feared the prospect of change. He assured the House that such was the state of feeling in the district which he had had the honour to represent. The measure would create a great alteration in the management of estates and farms. Many would suffer. He did not mean to say that farmers who held large tracts of land were men likely to feel distress, because they were men of capital, and perhaps by the aid of skill and industry would occupy nearly the same position after the expiration of three years as at present. If landed proprietors did not suffer, they would only avoid it by a change in the management of their estates, and by keeping down their outgoings to a very low degree. One of the largest expenses on an estate was the keeping of farming buildings in repair. This, however, could not be followed if this measure passed into a law. One effect of the change would be to make small farms great. It would not be attended by any good result to say that men ejected from a farm could go to the manufacturing districts and there earn their bread. To change the occupation of the mind or body, even in the time of youth, was difficult; but to force a man to do so at forty years of age was but to deliver him over to misfortune and misery. But why had the measure been introduced? It was not because trade had declined. He looked for a reason, and he found it had been stated that a partial destruction of the food of the Irish people had taken place. It would have tended better to have cured a temporary difficulty had the ports been opened, and corn admitted to feed the people, than counselling the introduction of a measure the full effect of which would not be fully felt for some years. The titheowners would be injured, and the agriculturists would be injured; the measure would be fraught with injury,

while to the people of Ireland it would afford no effectual relief.

Mr. M'GEACHY could not shelter himself under the wing of that most extraordinary doctrine which had been laid down by the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool, a doctrine mischievous in proportion to the respectability and weight of the quarter from which it had proceeded. Surely it was as individuals that they were responsible, and not as Members of any one sect or party. It might be true that every man in England who had sat in Her Majesty's Councils as a Cabinet Minister, with scarcely an exception, was now agreed as to the impolicy of continuing the existing Corn Laws. Still that would be no justification of his vote in favour of this measure, unless he were himself convinced, as convinced he was, that the measure was in itself both politic and just. In the exercise of an unfettered and dispassionate judgment, and with an earnest and most anxious desire to arrive at a just conclusion upon the subject, he approached the consideration of this important question. Having voted for those alterations in the Tariff which were equally with the present measures of the Government objected to by the protectionist party, and having seen the good effects produced by those alterations, he confessed that he thought there was every encouragement to proceed in the same course, and to attend to that recommendation in the Speech from the Throne which was directly controverted by the Amendment now before the House. The question was not merely of importance in its commercial bearings—a light in which it was too exclusively regarded by the hon. Member for Durham and his associates, but, now that it had been involuntarily proposed to that House by the present Ministry, of still greater importance in its political bearing. It was necessary to look at the question in both points of view; and first for the political part of the case, the importance of which he frankly admitted could not be overrated. In a free country, there was no evil so great, in his opinion, as a loss of confidence on the part of the people in public men. Were there any, he would ask, amongst those who declaimed so noisily on these topics now, who had ever reconsidered a vote, or rescinded a decision, in order to maintain in office a Minister who, as they deemed, would guarantee the maintenance of the existing Corn Laws? He never supported the Minister in the moment of his power when he thought him wrong, and that was a strong reason why he should not withhold his support from him now, in the moment of his weakness, when he thought him right. His belief was, that instead of a loss of confidence in public men, a fair and calm consideration of the course which had been taken during the last few months would, when the heat of party had subsided, go far to raise the character of public men, and to rekindle once more feelings of confidence in the integrity of statesmen. What were the simple facts of the case? Impressed with the belief that, with an impending scarcity in Ireland, and in the general circumstances of the country, some prompt remedy and some important alterations in our commercial policy were indispensable, the First Minister of the Crown took a step which was, in his judgment, worthy of the responsibilities of his office, and worthy of the Minister of a great country. On the 1st of November, 1845, he recommended to his Colleagues the opening of the ports for the admission of foreign grain. In that proposal the Cabinet did not agree, and the consequence was, the resignation of the Ministry. The difficulty of dealing with the Corn Laws might have been evaded by throwing up office in the first instance; but this, with the prospect of impending scarcity in Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman honourably declined, until he had tried the expedient of the opening of the ports with his own Cabinet. Having failed in this, he resigned office. He gave no opinion as to a successor. But to use his own words—

"I thought it unfair and dishonourable, under the impression that the noble Lord the Member for London would be the Minister, not to take those steps which I thought would diminish his embarrassments."

On the 6th of December the Ministry resigned; on the 8th of December the right hon. Gentleman wrote a letter to Her Majesty—

—"offering the assurance of his perfect readiness to support, if proposed by others, those measures which he had himself deemed necessary"—

And he further added, with a solicitude for the public service most worthy of imitation—

"That with regard to any increased estimates which the position of the country might render necessary, he would assume any degree of responsibility, present or retrospective, which could fairly attach to him."

Those who could take a dispassionate view of the case, and would endeavour to place themselves in the position of the right hon.

Baronet—a position encompassed with enormous difficulties—on the 1st of November, 1845, would not pass any harsh judgment upon the course pursued by him on that occasion. It was mighty easy to be statesmen after the fact—to magnify the claims of party above the interests of the country; but he thought he was perfectly justified in saying that, with his views of impending scarcity in Ireland, and of the advantages to be derived from a change of policy to the Empire at large, whatever might have been the seeming consistency of a proposal to maintain the existing Corn Laws, that proposal would have been the real treachery which you imputed to him, because he had thought it for their interests and for the interests of all to relieve them from the odium of stipulating for those restrictions in such a moment of pressure. There was but one point in the conduct of the political leaders on this question which he viewed with regret, and that was the somewhat unfair position which the noble Lord the Member for London, and the Whig party generally, had assumed for themselves during the course of these debates. They must remember that they were themselves protectionists up to a very late period, as well as those who sat on the other side of the House. But now, what were the alternatives proposed by the opponents of the Government? Their first proposal was a dissolution of the present Parliament. Now, this was a very good subject for declamation, and he had heard of it before. Why, he recollected that when the Government brought in their Bill for the endowment of the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth in the last Session of Parliament, just the same language was held as to the violation of pledges. Such a precedent once set would lead to the most dangerous consequences. What would be the practical results? Would such a course insure the calm, dispassionate, deliberate adjustment of conflicting claims on this or any other important question? Why, the result would be this, that you would have the country governed one year by Exeter-hall and the Anti-Maynooth Conference Committee, and the next by No. 17, Old Bond-street, and the Central Protection Society and its affiliated branches. Both to the electors and the elected the evil tendency of such a system would become more clearly apparent from the present embarrassment of many representatives and of many constituencies. Public men in England would henceforth be content to pledge themselves to do their duty, according to their view of the merits of every question as it was proposed for their consideration; and the electors would remember the advice of a great statesman, no mean authority on questions of constitutional right—Mr. Burke, who declared, that—

> "They are not under a false show of liberty, but in truth to exercise an unnatural, inverted domination, tyrannically to exact from those who officiate in the State, not an entire devotion to their interests, which is their right, but an abject submission to their occasional will, extinguishing thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgment, all consistency of character, whilst, by the very same process, they give themselves up, a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants, or courtly flatterers."

There was one resignation which had been both offered and accepted on the present occasion, which furnished a deplorable commentary on the justice of that view. If one man more than another in that House had shown an entire devotion to the public interest—to the cause of the suffering and helpless, wherever they were to be found, that man was the noble Lord (Lord Ashley) who for so many years represented the county of Dorset in Parliament. That noble Lord stood in no need of praise; his name would long live in the best affections of his countrymen; but that cause would hardly commend itself to the hearts of the people of England (and he thanked God that he did not feel it to be his duty to defend it) which involved in its maintenance the exclusion of such a man as Lord Ashley from Parliament. The other alternative proposed by the opponents of the Government was a compromise apparently in the shape of a fixed duty. Now, that appeared to him the most curious expedient for getting out of a difficulty that ever entered the mind of man. Why, the proposal of a fixed duty on corn by the Conservative party would involve precisely the greatest amount of political dishonesty that could by possibility be brought to bear upon the question. Why, this was precisely the point and pith of their contest with the Whig party at the election of 1841, so far as that contest turned upon the question of the Corn Laws, the merits of the sliding-scale as against the fixed duty. How could they, having deliberately made choice of the sliding-scale, now that that scale had slid from under them—how could they with common decency come forward now and propose a fixed duty when

that measure was repudiated by its own parents? Where was the man to be found who would boldly come forward and propose to the country the formation of an Administration on the basis of a permanent fixed duty on the importation of foreign corn? The protectionist party complained of the tortuous and ambiguous policy of the right hon. Gentleman. Now, he asked them what was their own?

"—— Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur."

Was there any man among them bold enough to stand by the sliding-scale? Would they support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Pontefract? The strongest arguments in favour of some change in our present policy was to be drawn from the social position of the country under the existing laws, and more especially from the condition of those for whose especial benefit it was said those laws ought to be maintained. The attack and the defence of the Corn Laws now rested alike on zeal for the good of the poor, and on an enlightened regard for the interests of the great body of the people. It was to be regretted that, in these days, the science of political economy, most important as it was, had come to be confounded too much with the science of government, that more comprehensive science which an eminent writer had so well described in saying—

"We may lay it down that the popular counsel given in our days to Governments is continually to favour the development of industry; it is to this point that we are now to make all our studies converge. But, according to our views, it is to higher objects that Government should direct its aims; it is upon the whole of what constitutes the national well-being; it is upon the relations, upon the proportions which ought to exist between different conditions, between different classes of citizens, in order that they may mutually aid each other, that all may supply the wants the one of the other; that all may unite hope to the feeling of security; that all, in short, may be enabled, by the development of their energies, to enjoy activity in calm."

Now, a good law must surely have produced good effects on the condition of the labourer. We allowed the state of the manufacturing operative to be precarious, that it must still remain such, after they had made this alteration in the Corn Laws; but those who were answerable for his condition were now tenfold more answerable from the tone adopted in the Anti-Corn-Law agitation; they asked them to assent to an alteration of these laws; and, if evil should ensue, they would make them heavily responsible by the projected alteration in the law of settlement for such contingent evil. He did not say—for he did not believe—that the Corn Law had produced the existing state of things; but could that law be defended by a reference to the state of the agricultural labourers? The extreme lowness of their wages, the difficulty of living, were so notorious as to make it a common expression, "It is a wonder how they live;" and so it was; and so it was also in 1789 with the peasantry of France, as any one might see who would consult the instructive pages of Arthur Young upon the subject. They knew what occurred in the one case: was it patriotic, or wise, or statesmanlike, to shut our eyes to the possible consequences of our own neglect in the other? He would notice one circumstance, which made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. In the month of July, 1844, the then Bishop of Ely addressed a letter to his clergy, in which he said—

"The accounts received of incendiary fires in Suffolk are so alarming that I feel it my duty to call the attention of the clergy of my diocese in that county to this distressing state of things. At one of the late fires in Suffolk, it is reported that there were great crowds of women and children who jeered the men who were laudably engaged in working the engines; and, as the different parts of the roof gave way, and the flames burst forth with greater violence, they showed their gratification by loud cheering. I am sure that this communication will be read with great sorrow by every conscientious parish priest, and will prove to him the necessity for increased exertions to check this flagrant wickedness."

Now, whatever difference of opinion might exist as to the cause, no doubt existed as to the fact of this awful occurrence.

"Causa latet—vis est notissima."

Since he had read that letter, nothing but his feelings of deference to the knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman on questions of commercial policy would ever have extracted from him a vote in favour of maintaining the existing Corn Laws. He must be a bold man indeed, who would now, in the teeth of such a fact as that—and it was not an isolated fact—and in the teeth of the unanimous assent of all the leading statesmen of England, maintain a system of laws for the special benefit of the agricultural peasantry, which, to say the very least, had co-existed with such a state of things as that described in the letter quoted from the Prelate who, only eighteen months ago, presided over the diocese of Ely. It was a most fallacious argument to adduce, that the state of the poor in this country was no worse than it was in other countries. The real question was, what was their rela-

tive position with reference to the rich? Had they advanced in their comforts in proportion to the advances made by the classes above them? When the inequalities of social condition in a nation became too great, all history taught but one fearful lesson as to the result. It was very easy to talk of our Constitution as a territorial Constitution; yet the men who now talked most loudly of the rights of electors were, in many cases, the very men who had degraded that most important class—the tenant farmers of England—into the mere political tools of their party purposes. And he confessed, that in coming to a conclusion upon that question, the old Spanish proverb had had considerable weight with him,—"Show me your friends, and I will tell you what you are;" and when he looked to the friends of the Government on the present occasion, what did he find? Was my Lord Talbot, for example, resident amongst the undrained lands and the agricultural helots of the county of Buckingham? Or were many other enlightened agriculturists, who supported these measures, answerable for the condition of Sussex, where a large farmer told a friend of his (Mr. M'Geachy's) the other day, as they were looking at a field in which there was a lamentable preponderance of thistles over turnips, "that he must own he had been very unfortunate in his turnips this year, but that for his part he never saw any harm come of thistles?" It only remained for him to express his earnest hope that, when that measure had passed, they should proceed to other measures calculated to meet the wants of the great mass of the people, their moral and intellectual, as well as their physical wants; and, looking at the state of some of our great manufacturing towns, he thought that there was now a noble opportunity for employing that enormous fund of the Anti-Corn-Law League, now likely to be useless for the purposes for which it was raised, in erecting some peaceful trophy of their victory, and for identifying the names of their leaders, not with the remembrance of a temporary and evanescent and most questionable agitation, but with some permanent establishments for the relief of the poor, the destitute, and the oppressed. For these and other reasons he had come, after full and earnest thought upon the subject, to the conclusion that it was the course most consistent with the duty he owed to the constituency he represented, with the duty he owed to the great interests of the country, and with that duty which he owed to his own personal honour, to give his cordial and earnest support to the measures now proposed by Her Majesty's Government; convinced as he was that they were measures which would tend to promote the general welfare of all classes of the community, and place the future greatness and prosperity of this Empire upon the one sole foundation upon which that greatness and that prosperity could securely rest — namely, the loyal affections of a contented and confiding people.

Mr. PACKE observed, that the hon. Member who had last addressed the House expressed a hope with respect to the appropriation of the funds of the Anti-Corn-Law League. He, however, believed that those funds had been raised for the purpose of agitation, and that they never would be applied to any other purpose. Much as he admired the tact and ability of the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, and often as he had supported him upon the other side of the House, and frequently upon this (the Ministerial) side of the House, yet he was compelled to say he had not as yet heard a single argument adduced in favour of a repeal of the Corn Laws. The present state of Ireland had been alluded to as a reason for the proposal of the present measure affecting corn; but he, for one, declared that he could see no connection between a remedy for the distresses of the people of Ireland, and the total repeal of the Corn Laws on the 1st day of February, 1849. The right hon. Baronet had maintained that another powerful argument in favour of free trade was to be found in the national prosperity that had existed for the past three years under the system of relaxed duties. The hon. Member who had just sat down also remarked, that the consequences of such relaxation had been so encouraging that he was prepared to record his vote in favour of still further reductions. Why, did not the hon. Member know that the prosperity of the past three years had been in consequence of that very protection which it was now sought to abolish? Nevertheless, that prosperity was adduced as an argument in favour of free trade. This prosperity had likewise been brought about by the prosperous harvest, and the increased production of the land under an improved system of agriculture. But if the law of 1842 was now to be altered, faith would be broken with the farmers, who had invested their capital believing that protection would be

extended to the produce of their industry. When they were told that they might improve their land, and thus obtain great benefit from the measures of free trade, he must say, that they might be pushed too far, and that they could not improve their land by the same process as they improved their manufacturing system. When the noble Lord the Member for London visited Glasgow, he told his auditory there that the right hon. Baronet had treated the agricultural party with great unkindness, for he had left them to speak for themselves. But he thought, when that noble Lord went back to Glasgow, he would be able to tell them that the agricultural party, both by the number and the excellence of their speeches, had defended themselves pretty well. But he agreed with the noble Lord that the right hon. Gentleman had treated his supporters with great unkindness. If he had told his supporters last December what he was going to do, they would not have committed themselves so much as they did, and certain hon. Friends of his would not have lost their seats in this House if they had known the views of the right hon. Baronet. They had been often told that they ought not to refer to old speeches, as these were altogether beside the question. Now it was very well for hon. Gentlemen opposite to complain of their finding fault with Government for having deserted them; but he should be glad to know if the hon. Member for Stockport, or the hon. Member for Durham, were to get up and declare that they had been converted to the cause of protection, would not Covent Garden ring with astonishment and indignation? The election of South Nottingham, and the rejection of Lord Lincoln, was one proof of the feelings of the agriculturists towards the Government. Another was the meeting which was held at Loughborough, on the borders of South Notts, where strong resolutions were passed, and much indignation expressed by the agriculturists at the measures proposed by Government. If a general election were to take place, there would be the greatest possible distrust of the Government and of all public men whatever. He objected to the measure, because as yet he had heard no reason for its adoption; and he believed its effect would be seriously and vitally injurious to the best interests of the country. He objected to it, secondly, because it was a breach of faith with the constituencies of the Empire —and above all, he objected to it because, in the words of a late Member of the Cabinet—a nobleman who was not only noble by birth, but noble by his political character, he objected to it because he could not support the Government without a violation of his consistency and honour.

MR. FOX MAULE hoped the House would allow him to make a few observations upon this question. He did so from feeling it was right that those who were connected solely with the landed property of the country, and who had nothing else to look to, ought to state the grounds upon which they supported the proposition of Her Majesty's Government. He could not say of that proposition that it had his entire and cordial approval, because it did not go to the extent he wished it to proceed. It fell short of that which he considered requisite to remedy the difficulties it was proposed to meet; but nevertheless, such as it was, he for one accepted it with gratitude, and he should endeavour to give it his most cordial support. He had listened to the hon. Gentleman who proposed the Amendment, and he confessed he felt some difficulty in accounting for the statement he had made with reference to the feelings this measure had created, not only in the breasts of landlords, but in the breasts of farmers and agricultural labourers on this side the Tweed. It had been his duty, ever since the measure had been proposed, to investigate the feelings which existed towards it in that country and among that class to which he more immediately belonged; and he had no hesitation in publicly declaring that the result of that investigation had been this—not only was there no panic among the landlords, or among the farmers, but in spite of all that had been said, agricultural arrangements were proceeding with an increased activity from day to day. He would state to the House, in reference to the observations which had fallen from the other side, a practical example of that which he had mentioned. When this proposition was first made, a document was laid before a public meeting emanating from one to whom, however he might have sometimes differed upon the means he took to advocate this question, he had no hesitation in saying the country was under a very deep debt of gratitude for his exertions. He meant the hon. Member for Stockport. The letter which that hon. Gentleman addressed to the farmers of the kingdom, shortly after this measure was proposed, had been widely canvassed in his

county, at many of the largest markets there; and within ten days after the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government had developed his measures, the farmers, who he would not say were in the first instance anxious for them, but after having seen and heard the arguments in their support in that letter, they came to the conclusion, that instead of being put off for three years, their interests would have been best consulted had the abolition of the Corn Laws taken place at once. Such was his own conclusion; and he must say, that he looked with regret upon the proposed measure of the Government, because it contained provisions for maintaining the present Corn Laws for a further period of three years; and he also looked with regret upon the time which had already intervened since the right hon. Gentleman had proposed this measure, and which he feared must yet intervene before even the measure of the right hon. Gentleman could be carried into effect. He could not but remember that on the 1st of November last the right hon. Gentleman had proposed, on account of the apprehended scarcity both in Ireland and in this country, to open the ports for the free admission of foreign grain. We had now arrived at nearly the end of March, and still there was no decided prospect of even the partial remedy of Her Majesty's Government being carried through that House of Parliament. He certainly had anticipated, and had hoped, before that House should separate for the Easter recess, that the measure would at any rate have passed that tribunal; but he regretted to think that, during the next week, they were to have mixed up with that debate another subject of the deepest importance to a neighbouring country; and the experience which he had had of Irish debates, forbad him to hope that the present measure would be read a third time in that House before the Easter recess. Under all the circumstances, he could not anticipate that before the end of May at least, any advantage could be expected to accrue from it. He could not find fault with the length of time which the discussion of that subject had already occupied; for every one had a right fully to speak upon so important a subject, particularly if he felt that his interests were affected. The landlords had stated that it was a question in which they were deeply concerned. He (Mr. F. Maule) must say he believed that in his county the interests of the landlords would be as safe after this measure should become law, as they were at present; and he not only believed that the alarm which they expressed now was groundless, but he was surprised at the conduct of many of those who had, if he might use the expression, the very groundlessness of it under their own immediate eyes. He knew one noble Lord who had withdrawn his proxy from the Government, and had given it to the noble Duke who led the protectionist party in another place; and yet he knew at the same time that ten days after the right hon. Baronet had made his proposal known to the country, the noble Lord had let two farms upon his own property at an increased rental. He stated the fact, because one fact was worth a bushel of arguments. One farm was renewed for a period of nineteen years. Previously the rent was 480*l.* a year. Ten days after the right hon. Baronet's proposal was made known, a rent was offered for the ensuing nineteen years of 570*l.* per annum; being an increase of 90*l.* a year. Hitherto the rent had been paid half in grain and half in money; the whole increase of rent was conditioned to be paid exclusively in money. The other farm was let within a few days afterwards. He was not acquainted with the precise details; but he was within the mark when he stated that it had been let at an increased rent of 20 per cent. He had consulted nearly the whole of the land agents in the large county of Perth, and they could not inform him of one single instance within their knowledge where the lease of a farm having expired, the offers on it had not risen, and the increased offers had not been accepted by the landlords. He observed that a few days ago a petition had been presented in another place from the county of Haddington, against the proposed measures of the Government; and yet he knew that so far from having been depressed in value, a farm in that county had not many days ago been let upon a new lease at the enormous price of five guineas an acre. These facts concurred to make him think that if the whole agricultural interest of Scotland were fairly to consider the proposed measures, the result would be that they would look forward to the issue of the principles of free trade as to one which would enable them to stand in a much improved condition with reference to the other classes of the community. He looked upon those measures of Her Majesty's Government as calculated to sooth and calm the feelings of irritation which might exist in our own community;

but he looked also upon those measures of commercial freedom, as calculated to reach to a far greater extent, and to secure peace between nations and throughout the world. Let them look to America, and he would ask to what did they attribute the changed tone of America? He attributed it, first, to the calm and dignified manner in which all parties in this country had treated the subject in dispute; but he equally ascribed it to those measures of freedom of trade and commercial liberty which had emanated from Her Majesty's Government, and which he was sure would be found by all parties, whether extended to America or to any other country on the face of the globe, to be their best security for peace, whilst they would eventually secure to this country an abundant supply of all articles which entered into the food and conduced to the comfort of the people.

MR. CHOLMONDELEY, in venturing to offer to the House a very few remarks upon the important question which now occupied its attention, might perhaps be permitted to allude for one moment to a subject to which an hon. Member had referred; the allusion was to a subject which he had had no intention of introducing—a dissolution of Parliament upon this question. There might be many grave objections urged against such a course; but still he could not but think, in spite of those objections, that such a course would have been most safe and most advisable. He might be told that it would be unconstitutional and dangerous — that the House of Commons stood to the country in precisely the same relative position as an individual Member stood to his constituents, and that the same considerations which would prevent the Representative from consulting his constituents as to a particular vote, ought to withhold the House from appealing to the country on this particular question. All this he had no doubt was theoretically true; but how did the matter stand when we came to practical results? He thought it might be fairly illustrated by one particular case—the case of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. On one memorable occasion the right hon. Gentleman had felt it necessary to resign his trust into the hands of those who had committed it to him. He had told the House the other night that he then thought he had taken a wrong course. That might have been the case constitutionally; but did the right hon. Gentleman wish what he had done undone? He thought not. He had done it because he felt that honour and conscience required it; and for yielding to those dictates he was sure neither an individual Member nor that House would ever lose credit with the country. He thought that by the same dictates of honour and conscience the House was, even at this late period, bound to give the country an opportunity of pronouncing upon a measure which was so important to every one in the country. Surely if this measure was to become the law of the land, the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would count his numbers with greater satisfaction, when he felt that he could not be accused of taking the country by surprise; and that the majority which enabled him to carry this measure was a majority (which he denied the present would be) which spoke the sense of the country. Having said thus much on this point, he might now perhaps be allowed to state in a very few sentences the reasons why with much regret he now found himself in opposition to the Government. He must say that he saw nothing in the state of the case, and heard nothing in the arguments which had been advanced, to change the opinions which he had always entertained on this subject. He might be met with statements of distress, famine, and pestilence in Ireland, and asked if such matters were to be treated with levity. He did not believe that there was in this country any general feeling of indifference to the state of Ireland. But admitting even to their utmost extent the statements of present misfortune, and, going still further, admitting all the expected calamity, he still thought that the Irish emergency might have been met at a less price than that of a total revolution of the whole agricultural interest, as well as the whole home and foreign trade of the country. When he said revolution, he used the word in its literal sense, a turning over, an absolute alteration, for such it was; it was an absolute revolution for good or for evil: he trusted it might be for good; but suppose it were for evil—suppose the present measure, instead of relieving Irish misery, were but to superadd English to Irish distress—in what a position should we feel ourselves? And be it remembered that this measure, offering in case of failure so terrible an alternative, was brought forward, not at a moment of great national distress, of great depression of trade; it was not brought forward at an emergency when to avoid the certainty of im-

pending ruin they must embrace the alternative of great possible calamity; on the contrary, it was proposed to them at a period of (with one exception) almost unexampled national prosperity; and with regard to that one exception, with regard to the Irish emergency, it surely would have been better met by the right hon. Baronet's original proposition of opening the ports. He knew that the proposition had once been negatived in the Cabinet; but he could not but think that the powers of persuasion of the right hon. Baronet, which had induced the Cabinet to co-operate in the larger measure, would have enabled him to carry the smaller; and as far as Ireland was concerned, that smaller measure, the temporary opening of the ports, would have afforded more effectual or more immediate relief, putting out of the question the inexpediency of meeting a temporary evil by a permanent enactment. And, as to the difficulty alluded to by the right hon. Baronet of closing the ports again after "the sweets of the absence of protection" had once been tasted, surely that was the most conclusive argument that could be adduced in favour of such a measure; for the degree to which "the sweets of the absence of protection" received the approval or disapproval of the country in general, would furnish the strongest possible justification of the abolition, or reason for the continuance, of the present system of Corn Laws. So much for the state of the case. With respect to arguments, he had promised not to detain the House; and after the lengthened discussion that had taken place, he was not presumptuous enough to suppose that he could offer anything new upon the subject; but there was one point on which he wished to say a single word. In the course of his speech, the right hon. Baronet had endeavoured to prove that a low price of food and high wages went hand in hand, and adduced the last three years in support of his assertion; but the right hon. Gentleman totally passed over the fact, that, during the last three years there had been a cause in operation which, however beneficial, could not be considered as permanent, and, consequently, was not admissible into a calculation of that nature. He alluded to the immense number of railroads in process of construction. These produced an immense artificial and temporary demand for labour, and consequent increase in the rate of wages; whilst good harvests had produced a comparatively low price of food; both great blessings to the country, but neither of which could be counted on as permanent ones. He had, he must own, great confidence in the sagacity of the right hon. Gentleman; and he was also sure that the right hon. Gentleman had not brought forward any measure of the expediency of which he was not convinced. He was ready to admit, too, that, as far as the right hon. Gentleman had gone, his measures had worked well for the country. He trusted the results of the present measures might be good, for he liked to look at the bright side of every question. At the same time he could not but see that human nature was fallible. The right hon. Gentleman might be right; but then he might be wrong, and that, too, upon a matter of vital importance. With the exception of Irish distress, he believed the country to be in a state of great prosperity. Then, ought they to run this risk, and expose the country to a great danger? He had, he repeated, great confidence in the right hon. Baronet's sagacity, and on ordinary occasions would strain a point, or sacrifice an opinion, to support him; but he could not but feel that this was an enormous experiment; uncalled for by present emergencies; tried, not at a period of great national distress, but at a moment of almost unexampled national prosperity—an experiment that might, and he trusted would be, successful; but one whose failure would be so disastrous, that he could not undertake the responsibility of being one of those who helped to make this measure the law of the land. He trusted that in the few remarks he had ventured to make to the House, he had abstained entirely from all personalities, which had unfortunately prevailed but too much in these debates. A great cry had been got up, more out of that House than in it, against the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government. In this cry he did not participate, for, he said, that if ever there was a man who gave unequivocal proof of his sincerity, by his sacrifices, in bringing forward measures that he believed to be for the good of the country, it was the right hon. Gentleman. He could understand changing—honestly changing his opinion, and openly avowing that change; but that which he did not understand was men thinking one way and voting another. This, he said, was the real mischief—this it was that went far to destroy the bonds of union between the representative and his constituents—this it

was which really destroyed the public confidence in public men. If were to do this —if we were thus to

"—— play fast and loose with faith,
And make unconstant children of ourselves,"

it would do more real mischief to the country, than all the Bills that ever were introduced into Parliament.

Mr. H. VERNON said, that if, as it had been argued, Parliament was not in a state competent to judge of this measure, it was the duty of the House to address Her Majesty, praying Her to dissolve the Parliament; and if such an Amendment had been moved instead of that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, it would have been more consonant with the views expressed by hon. Gentlemen. He himself stood in a position of some peculiarity; for he was obnoxious to those shafts to which hon. Members were exposed who had heretofore been ranged on the side of protection, and who had felt compelled, by an imperative sense of duty, to take another course—a course which was not the most congenial to his sentiments, nor most accordant with his foregone conclusions. He had come down to the House the other night in the hope that a *5s.* fixed duty would have found advocates in many hon. Gentlemen on the opposite benches. He had always considered that a moderate fixed duty was the best for the agriculturists; but he had been compelled, like all public men, to act with a great body: it was no use to take up an "insulated" position when there was a vast number of important questions which attached a man to his party. Undoubtedly, in early life, he had never attached himself to the party of the First Lord of the Treasury; and he had not become his supporter till in 1836 he had seen the necessity of joining his standard; and, ever since, he had admired the wisdom and integrity of his course. The right hon. Baronet knew that he had never asked and had never received a favour from him—[Sir R. Peel: Hear]—but he had given the right hon. Baronet his best support. With regard to the general question, he frankly stated, that for the last twenty years he had been of opinion that a *5s.* duty would not throw any great impediment in the way of the interests of commerce, and would not injure the prosperity of the country, whilst it would stop the evils of speculation, and give, if not a protection, an assistance to the agriculturists; but he had always felt a difficulty, as a representative of an agricultural district, in reconciling his wish to defer to his constituents with the interests of the country. A fixed duty was not now attainable, and in supporting the present proposal he was under the conviction that he should suffer a loss of from five to ten per cent in his rents. He did not hold that the protection which gave him this was a bane to agriculture; but if there were any truth in political economy it would prove ultimately to be a landlord's and not a tenant's question; and he felt bound to vote for the real interests of the poor, and for what would promote the industry of the country, and, ultimately, its prosperity, notwithstanding any private injury done to his own interests. He must say, also, that throughout America he had found but one feeling among the friends of peace, who said that if we would only interest, by prosperity, the Western States of America, which were invulnerable to our arms, and inaccessible to our commerce—for we had already the interests of the Eastern States in our favour—we should do more to promote the peace of America than all the concessions we should make in the Oregon or elsewhere. He had received a letter from a very intelligent merchant at Boston, who said that the effect of the proposed alteration in the Tariff would be that England would completely fortify herself against all competition in manufactures. Again, it was not the experience of the three prosperous years of 1843, 1844, and 1845, but the experience of the three famine years of 1840, 1841, and 1842, that had convinced the right hon. Baronet of the inutility of the sliding-scale; and it was upon those grounds he should support the second reading of this Bill.

Captain BERKELEY said, that he had entered that House believing that the Corn Laws, as they were then constituted, were for the good of the country, though he had always voted with the hon. Member for Wolverhampton for an inquiry into them, as he conceived that such an inquiry was just and right. However, when he found that the noble Lord whose political opinions had generally guided his own, united with the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who, he might say, was one of the greatest statesmen of his time, for one purpose, in which neither of them, especially the right hon. Gentleman, could have any personal interest, he, as a practical man, without pretending to understand, as some hon. Gentleman opposite had pretended to understand, political economy, felt himself

bound to give way to the right hon. Baronet, and to vote in favour of this Bill.

Sir R. H. INGLIS said, that the hon. and gallant Officer (Hon. Capt. Berkeley), who preceded him, had by his political life in general, and by one memorable vote in particular, entitled himself to respect in all his other Parliamentary proceedings, for earnestness and sincerity, even where he did not carry conviction to his hearers. As to his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Vernon), who preceded the gallant Officer, he (Sir R. H. Inglis) would not follow his speech further than to say, that one more full of the personal confessions of a public man, of the private narrative of his travels, of an *eloge* on his own high-minded principles and consistency, he had never heard. For the condescension with which he obviously regarded the weakness of those with whom he was now differing, in this section of the House, they all doubtless felt as grateful as they ought; but he would not let off his hon. and learned Friend without one parting observation. He had referred largely to his political life; but the date of his conversion to those views which now, so much to his own satisfaction, authorized him to lecture these benches, was not earlier than the 11th June last year; for, on the preceding day, namely, on the 10th June, 1845, he found his hon. and learned Friend most stoutly denying, in opposition to the hon. and consistent Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) that the Corn Law does restrict the supply of food, or that it is prejudicial to the welfare of the country, especially of the working classes, or that it ought to be abolished. When he saw the name of Mr. Granville Vernon in the memorable list of the majority of 254, nine months ago, he felt that that hon. Member was not the person who was entitled to taunt with weakness those who retained their own and his last year's opinions. Then as to his hon. Friend the Member for Honiton, who had addressed the House with so much earnestness and so much ability, he must deny his right also to be an authority in the matter; since he also, though from his speech it might have been thought that he was one who had always held his present opinions, and was thereby entitled to give lectures to others upon them, was one of the new converts, whose name appeared in the same memorable list in last year's division against the repeal of the Corn Laws. Now, as to his right hon. Friend the Member for the county of Perth (Mr. F. Maule), to whom that disability did not apply, he had unintentionally omitted a most important element in the statements which he had made respecting the increased rent given for farms in that county within the last few days or weeks, as if such increase proved the confidence of the parties in the measures of Her Majesty's Government, and that agriculture was to flourish even more without protection than with it. The facts proved no such thing. The leases were leases for nineteen years, granted in the period of the greatest depression, and renewed, when renewed, in reference to the current value of all things. On the general subject of the night, after a debate of eighteen days, he was not presumptuous enough to think that on the nineteenth evening he could introduce any new matter; but still there were three or four points to which, though he had been a tolerably regular listener, he did not think that sufficient attention had been paid. They were these: first, the expense of the experiment now under consideration; secondly, the injustice of that experiment as related to one of the great interests of the country, he meant that which was connected with tithe rent-charge; thirdly, the injustice of the measure to the general agriculture of the country in the measure of compensation not being contemporaneous; and, fourthly, admitting, what he denied, the extent of the existing distress, the utter inapplicability of the proposed remedy to meet that distress. On the first point, he did not think that it had been made sufficiently prominent in the debates, that the cost of the present measure, "that enormous experiment," as his hon. Friend the Member for Honiton had called it, was probably not less than 1,500,000*l.* of yearly revenue. In the account ordered by the House to be printed on the 6th of February last, it appeared that a sum of 357,203*l.* would, on the 1st of February, 1849, be permanently lost, as duties on corn to the yearly receipts of the Exchequer; there was a further sum of 55,879*l.* as duties on other articles absolutely repealed: so much for positive loss. Then there was a positive outlay of above 500,000*l.* sterling annually, in the shape of compensatory boons to the agricultural interests—some, for saving the counties the expense of hanging a criminal—some, 20,000*l.* in one item—some, 30,000*l.* in another. But besides this loss and this outlay, there was the risk of enormous reductions on the existing duties on the ar-

ticles which were to be admitted at lower rates. The aggregate thus risked was 2,326,105. Now, he would take one item only, that of spirits. Foreign spirits were now admitted at a duty of 1*l.* 2*s.* 10*d.* per gallon; henceforth they were to be admitted at 15*s.* per gallon. Either the consumption of foreign spirits would remain the same, in which case the revenue would lose 413,791*l.* every year; or it would rise, according to the diminished price, and, in that case, you would gain the same duty by having distributed more than half a million of ardent foreign spirits throughout the country, increasing the temptations to crime, as well as disturbing many of the existing commercial interests of the people. The second point to which he wished briefly to direct the attention of the House, was the gross injustice of the measure as related to the owner of tithe-rent-charge. His hon. Friend who seconded the Amendment (Sir J. Y. Buller) had with great force and effect impressed this point on the House. He would not weary the House by referring, except passingly, to the measure for the commutation of tithes, which became law only some seven or eight years ago. At the time he stated that, without entering into the question of the divine right of tithes, nothing was clearer than that tithes were the oldest legal property in England. That property the owners did not desire to exchange for any other. Without their request, and against their interest, the Legislature compelled the surrender of this property in exchange for the present rent-charge. A bargain is a bargain whether made with a man in a black coat, or with a man in a blue coat. That bargain you made with the tithe-owner. You told him, that, instead of having the first interest in the soil of England, whether cultivated or uncultivated, whenever it might be brought to bear produce, he should have hereafter, in reference to that land only which at the date of the compact was under cultivation, a certain number of bushels of wheat, at a price varying according to the average of a certain number of preceding years; that wheat being a protected article, protected by the laws for the encouragement of native industry and native produce. What is the case now? You introduce a measure, without the consent of the tithe rent-charge owner, which is, according to your own showing, to diminish the value of that which you have given him, in exchange for an absolute right over all the lands of England. The owners of the other interests in those lands may possibly—though he (Sir R. H. Inglis) thought not with any certainty—hereafter, at the distance of some years, and with an amount of intermediate misery which has not hitherto been described in these debates, be enabled to recover rents equal, perhaps, to those at present. We have learnt now to produce meat by the plough; the application of science to agriculture has enabled the farmer by his green crops to provide food for cattle, to a degree unknown even fifty years ago; and by the conversion of arable to pasture lands, the actual revenue to the lord may possibly be as great a few years hence as now. But there is one class of proprietors for whom no such resource is open. They are irrevocably bound to receive an unvarying quantity of one article of produce at a lower and a lower price. Is not the object of your measure to ensure a lower price? If it be not, and if such be not the result, you have needlessly disturbed all the social and domestic interests of the country; if it be, and if it succeed, you have perpetrated a gross injustice not merely on an unprotected class, but on that very class which, on the faith of your own laws, within the last eight years, you have compelled to exchange their old security on the broad lands of England for a bargain which you are yourselves the first to violate. On the third point, he (Sir R. H. Inglis) would be very brief. He was, in fact, hardly able, as the House would perceive, to make himself heard. He referred to the injustice done to the landed interest, not merely by the measure itself, but by the delay of the measures which ought contemporaneously to have been brought before the House. It was possible that the measure now on the Table might become law; while the compensatory measures, however inefficient they were for actual relief, might not even be proposed. He repeated that he did not much value them: he thought that the transfer of some large portion of the poor's rate to the Consolidated Fund would have been a far greater relief to the landed interest, while it would distribute the burden more equally, as it ought. His fourth point was, the utter inapplicability of the proposed measure to the relief of the evil which it professed to meet. There was no more connexion between them than, according to the popular version of the old saying, there was between Tenterden Steeple and Goodwin Sands. He fully admitted that his

right hon. Friend at the head of the Government was perfectly sincere in his present course. He could have no conceivable motive for it except such sincerity. He was to govern England on his own principles, and not on those of any other man: on his own honest convictions to-day, not on those which he might have held with equal honesty yesterday. But, while he admitted this most fully, he could not repeat, what he had stated on a former occasion, that exactly in proportion as he acquitted his right hon. Friend as a man, he must depreciate him as a statesman—all whose opinions on commercial policy must have been wrong for the thirty-five years of his past public life, if his opinions for the last three months were right. Though he did not think that a case had been made out for opening the ports in November last, that at least was, in point of time, a remedy more near to the disease than the measure now in progress. A famine is threatened in Ireland this spring; and you meet it by a measure which is to take effect on the 1st February, 1849. His right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) said on this day month, that the climax of the distress would be three months onward. How is scarcity to be cured or relieved in Ireland three months hence, by importing corn duty-free three years since? Upon every ground he concurred with the Amendment moved, in a speech of such talent, by his hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire (Mr. Yorke), though he did not quite follow him in some of the latter allusions in that speech. He retained his old convictions in favour of his own country, and of the duty of protecting the interests of England, rather than of encouraging those of Poland or Russia. He was not of that school who looked with equal regard or equal indifference to all other countries and to his own—

"—— Whose impartial view,
Thy interests, Britain, ranks with thine, Peru."

He felt persuaded, that the great change now meditated on one interest would materially affect others, which ought to be equally dear: and believing that it would not remedy even the local and temporary evil upon which it was professed to be grounded, he cordially concurred in its rejection.

Mr. CHILDERS gave his approbation to the present measure, under the conviction that the price of corn in this country would not be at all reduced by a system of free trade. A return which was prepared at the Foreign Office last year, proved, on the authority of our Consuls, that the price of bread in England was as low as in any part of the world. It was a fact that bread in London was chaper than in Ostend and Antwerp, and that the steamers plying between England and Belgium invariably laid in their stock of bread in London. The price of inferior bread at Dantzic was 2½*d.* per lb., at Warsaw 3¼*d.*, at Hamburg 2¼*d.*, Amsterdam 3¼*d.* At Odessa bread was 2¾*d.* per lb., though corn was only 28*s.* a quarter, and in each of those cases bread in London was lower in price per lb. Marseilles was comparatively near Odessa, and drew a great quantity of corn from that port; and yet it was a singular fact, corn in Marseilles was at times dearer than in England. Why, then, should we be afraid of the effects of free trade? The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had declared "that there was a remarkable tendency apart from all legislation, to a decline in the price of wheat in this country," Now this was a proposition opposed to his view. The right hon. Baronet had quoted in support of the argument the average prices during periods of five years each, fom 1800 to 1830; but there was a fallacy in this argument. The right hon. Baronet had left the question of the currency entirely out of consideration. When the currency assumed a natural and healthy condition, the prices rose. From 1825 to 1830, for instance, the price was 56*s.* 7*d.*; but from 1830 to 1835, the average was 57*s.* 11*d.* Wool, and other articles, fluctuated in the same way, and ultimately the same results were produced. He also anticipated great benefit from free trade, by opening the ports of other nations. He felt assured that our good example would be everywhere followed, and that an extension of peace and civilization would be the consequence.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve o'clock.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME LXXXIV.

BEING THE SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1846.

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*** It has seemed better, instead of incumbering this Index with a reference to Private Bills, upon which debate seldom occurs, to collect them in a Table at the end of the Session, in form similar to the Paper issued by the House of Commons. The date will be a sufficient reference to the Volume.

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END OF VOLUME LXXXIV., SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1846.